

THE 1034. G. 2

Worthy Communicant:

Or, A

TREATISE,

Shewing the due Order of Re-
ceiving the Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper.

By JEREMIAH DYKE.

Whereunto is added,

A Dialogue between a *Minister* and a
private Christian; wherein the Doctrine
and Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper* is
explained; the Objections of *Enthu-*
siasts, and Corruptions of *Papists* are
obviated; and several cases of Con-
science and Doubts Resolved.

The 16th Edition; with the Addition
of *Meditations and Prayers, before, at,*
and *after the Administration.*

L O N D O N :

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and *Jonathan Robinson* at the Golden Lion,
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To the Reader.

WEre not Christianity declined, and the love of its Professors to their Redeemer, and to each other, grown cold, the Doctrine of the Lord's Supper would be better studied, and its Celebration more frequent, and better attended. The Primitive Christians thought it not such a burthen, as was enough to be born once or twice a Year, but such a Duty, Profit, and Delight, that once a week was too little for its exercise and enjoyments. Christ is as sweet as ever. The virtues of his Blood are as powerful. His Ordinances for conveying Spiritual Benefits, perish not with the using. Nor hath that Blessing which our Lord adjoined to this Ordinance, in its first Institution, lost its Spirits and Efficacy, where 'tis duly administered and attended unto.

I would it were not too true, that as an unworthy Ignorance, Contempt, or Neglect of it, hath bin the guilt of many; so a superstitious, or superficial practice of it hath bin the guilt of more. All which together have joined their Forces, to bring it under the disreputation of an indifferent or insipid thing. But, blessed be God, there are many, whose conscientious and orderly attendance on the Lord therein, hath met with that entertain-

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ment and Soul-advantage, which hath commended it to their Experience, as the Authority of their Lord's Command hath commanded it to their Conscientious observance. Yea, such have bin their Blessings at the Lord's Table, that they have reckoned its Hours the best they have enjoyed, or hope to enjoy on this side Heaven.

What can be more glorious to behold, than the reconciliation of all the Attributes of God, to the raising of sinful miserable Man to the happiness he had lost, and more? What more stupendous, than that God should become Man, that he might obey, suffer, and die to make the Atonement? What more satisfactory to Faith, than to behold a price laid down by our Redeemer, to the full value of all that good it hopes for, according to the Promises and Covenant? What can meet the taste and relish of a Soul bowed down under a load of Sin and Wrath, whose Spirits are wasted with sorrowful and successless Agitations, under the sense of its Misery and Impotency; like the transmitting its Burthens on those Shoulders, its Wounds into the Body and Soul of that Almighty Redeemer, who became Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him? What more acceptable to a Soul principled with the Love of God and Christ, than to have their
Love

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Love again and again repeated, and particularly confirmed to it : And also under the sweet and powerful Impressions of that Love, to be returning Love for Love, protesting its unexpressible Obligations to the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, and renewing its Vows and Covenants for ever to be the Lord's, who thus dearly bought it ? What more welcome and edifying to a real Saint, than to behold that sight in which Sin is discovered most hateful, and Holiness most lovely and rational : to eat and drink of that Cheer, which is both a Feast and Physick ; a Cordial to Grace and well-grounded Comforts, and a Poison to those lusts and delusions that war against the Soul ? In a word, to behold the Enemy in his full strength, and our Champion obtaining a compleat Victory ? To celebrate those Triumphs with our Saviour, (so far as we are capable now) whose Glory will be infinitely great, and everlasting in the other Life ?

These, and many more; even all the Blessings of the Gospel, are the Entertainments and Exercises of this Ordinance ; and that in a more than ordinary solemn and effectual way. It would be much better with the Church of God, if Subjects of this nature were more relished ; and took up the room of those, whose tendency is but unprofitable Contention, and the sowing the Spirits of Men and Christi-

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was one towards another. The Holy Apostle Paul desired to know nothing among the Corinthians but Jesus Christ and him Crucified. The Temper, or rather the Distempers of the Professors of our Age and Nation, being much the same with theirs, calls for the same Remedy. Were their Notions high, but Lives very low? Contentions hot about Circumstances, and Affections cold to their Brethren, and the more substantial Duties of Religion? Did they admire Men, dissolve into Parties, slighting in the mean while the grand Interest of Christianity, and the Common-Wealth of Israel? I would I could say, that we tread not in their steps. Certainly we need to be minding more a Crucified Christ, to teach us Mortification, and to be more in the Communion of Saints, to excite our Love, and cement our Union.

Among others who have written on the Subject of the Lord's Supper, the worthy and reverend Author of this Treatise (Mr Jer. Dyke, sometime Minister of Epping in Essex, now with God) hath not bin the least considerable. And although the present Age hath bin so thronged with Books treating on Subjects of Divinity, that many have bin stifled so soon as peept out into the World, and many more (though deserving better entertainment) have not lived to the expence of their first Impression. This Treatise hath found acceptation for above
fifteen

Epistle to the Reader.

fifteen Impressions, which can be said of few Books beside, and which is an evidence of its abundant usefulness and value. That it might be within the reach of the Poor, who cannot spare the price of it at large, I have abridged it to this little Volumn; wherein you have the Author's method and heads of Matter precisely, and what I judged most considerable. If in the Connexion I have sometimes varied the phrase and stile, necessity may plead my Pardon; and I hope the Judicious Reader will find (upon the whole) no just cause of distaste. Some things, where I found occasion, I have explained; and many useful Citations in the Margin, (which were only in their Original Language, and so out of the reach of the meer English Readers) I have turned into English for their service. I have also added a Dialogue, explaining the Doctrine and Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in its Nature, Administration, Ends, and Benefits; obviating the Objections of Enthusiasts, and the Corruptions of Papists; and resolving divers Cases of Conscience, so far as is meet for a work of this Nature. The whole I leave to the blessing of the Lord, who am the unworthiest of his Servants,

JOHN FALDO.

A Table of the Heads of this Treatise.

THe due order of receiving the Sacrament of the Supper, and seeking God therein, stands in three kinds of Duties.

1. Duties Antecedent. In doing such Duties as must go before the Sacrament. All which come under the general Head of Preparation. Preparation is twofold.

1. Habitual; having the Soul furnished with such Graces as may make a Man a Worthy Communicant.

They are these, {
 { Knowledge,
 { Faith,
 { Repentance,
 { Charity,
 { Obedience.

2. Actual, which stands in these things :

1. Solemn sequestration of a Man's self.

2. Examination, {
 { 1. Of the truth of Faith,
 { Repentance,
 { Love,
 { Obedience.
 { 2. Of growth of Grace.
 { 3. Of our Wants.

3. Renewing and quickning our Habitual Graces.

4. Excitation and stirring up in our selves strong desires after Christ.

5. Stirring up in our selves a strong expectation of the Benefits to be had in the Sacrament.

6. Earnest seeking of God by Prayer.

2. Duties

The Heads of this Treatise.

2. Duties concomitant. In doing such Duties as accompany the Action of Receiving, where the general Duty is: The offering up of our selves to God, in an holy and spiritual Disposition in receiving the Sacrament.

- This stands in five things.
1. Solemn and serious Meditation.
 2. An exercise of Repen-
rance stand-
ing in { Godly sorrow for
sin.
A solemn renew-
ing of our Cove-
nant with God.
 3. The actua-
ting of Faith
upon { Sacramental Offers;
Sacramental Pro-
mises.
Sacramental Re-
presentations.
 4. The Duty of Thanksgiving.
 5. An Exercise of Love and Mercy.

3. Duties subsequent. In doing such Duties as must follow after Receiving.

1. Examining a Man's self, how he hath sped at the Supper.

- And they are two,
1. If sped ill, then { 1. Find out the cause of miscarriage, and be humbled for it.
2. Labour by after-pains to quicken & make the Sacrament effectual.
 2. If sped well, then { 1. Bless God for it.
2. Labour to keep and maintain the holy frame of Heart gotten at the Sacrament.
 2. A special care to keep our Vows, and express the power of the Ordinance, in our holiness of Life and Obedience.

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The Supplement.

A Dialogue. Meditations, and Prayers.

*An Advertisement concerning the Addition of
Meditations and Prayers to this Edition.*

THe reverend Author of this Treatise of the *Lord's
Supper*, (*Mr. Jer. Dyke*, now with God) and
the reverend Author of the *Dialogue*, having said so
much on this solemn Ordinance, one would think the
Addition of *Meditations and Prayers* needless, and
that the worthy Communicant being so well instru-
cted, may be left to form the several Directions into
suitable

Advertisement.

suitable Meditations and Prayers ; but it being the complaint of many well-disposed Persons, that tho they have taken much pains with their own Souls, and read much on this Subject, yet they are at a loss, and much confused; not only in their own Closets, but even when they come to the Table of the Lord, to their great trouble and discouragement : One reason of this, (next depending too much on their own Preparations) I humbly conceive is, for want of observing a good Method and Order in disposing their Prayers and Meditations ; for as the strongest Army, for want of Order and good Discipline may do but little service, so a throng of Thoughts and Meditations, if they be not well ranged, may thrust themselves forward to the hinderance of each other ; therefore I have endeavoured to set those Thoughts which I conceive will be in the *Worthy Communicant*, in their proper places, that they may tally forth and second each other, for the Communicants greatest advantage, by adding, at the end of this Treatise, some Forms (or rather Directories) of Meditations and Prayers, suitable *before, at, and after* the Administration : which I hope will be useful, not only to young Beginners, but even to such as have long frequented the Lord's Table, and that with profit and delight ; but it too too often happens, that their Affections grow chile and cold by too much conversing with earthly Objects, so that they cannot easily be revived : possibly the reading over such like Meditations, may stir up that Fire that lies buried in their Souls ; which when done, the holy Flame will be so fervent, that these forms of Meditations here offered, will be too little Fuel for its heat ; which were not intended to stint and confine it, but (as intimated before) to show the *Worthy Communicant* how he may dispose his own Meditations, according to the several parts of the *Lord's Supper*, with pleasure and profit. Farewel.

The



The Introduction to the following Treatise, grounded upon 1 Chron. 15. 13.

For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due Order.

C H A P. I.

That God must be sought in a right Order, as well as in a right Ordinance.

WE read, 1 Sam. 4. 3, 4. That the Israelites being beaten by the Philistines, they send for the Ark of God from Shiloh to be brought into the Camp, that it might save them out of the hands of their Enemies. Such are the silly Confidences of superstitious and carnal Hearts, relying on outward signs, and neglecting the *real* Presence of God :

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as if God were chained to the Ark. A far wiser course it had bin to have procured the presence of the Lord of Hosts himself amongst them, which could have saved them without the Ark, but not the Ark without that. This they might have learned from Moses, Numb. 10. 36. *And it came to pass, when the Ark set forward, that Moses said; Rise up, O Lord, and let thine Enemies be scattered.* He knew that though the Ark did rise, if God sat still, it could not make one Enemy fly.

But had there been somewhat in the meer presence of the Ark, Hophni and Phineas being with it, were enough to distaste the Lord to a departure. The Issue gave a Character of their vain Confidence. That which they hoped would have saved them out of the hands of their Enemies, was delivered into the hands of their Enemies. *He delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies hand, Psalm. 78. 61.* For all this, the Philistines had little cause to boast of their Victory; though the Ark saved not Israel, it proved a Plague to their Adversaries. God sometimes hides his Face from his People, but he sets his Face against the Wicked: the Philistines had soon enough of their Prey. The presence of an angry God is Ruine and Terror,

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as of a reconciled God is safety and sweetness. Upon this Experiment the *Philistines* send the Ark to its own Home, acknowledging that though *Israel* were *Vanquished*, the God of *Israel* remained *Victor* over their *Conquerors*.

The Ark being sent home, was placed in *Kirjath-Jearim*, where it continued till the time of *David's* being King over all *Israel*, and seated in *Jerusalem*.

The first thing *David* then undertakes, is to bring the Ark to *Jerusalem*; but in its management a double Disorder was committed: The Ark that should have bin born on the *Priests Shoulders*, was *carried*, and *Uzzah* touched the Ark; for which error he died on the spot, as an Example to the rest, of God's displeasure against those who shall neglect but the *Manner* and *Circumstances* of his Ordinances, where his *Authority* hath prescribed: So jealous is God of his great Name, which he will have sanctified by all those that draw near unto him. The Sense of this puts *David* on a Reformation of that disorder, which he acknowledges the cause of the fore breach on *Uzzah*, 1 Chron. 15. 13. *The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due Order.* The point that we may learn hence, is this:

That it is not enough to seek God, but we must also seek him in the Order he hath appointed : and where it is otherwise, Men may expect a Breach instead of a Blessing. The want of this due Order, turned the expectations of a good day into sadness: they were sent home with sorrowful Hearts. And if God were so severe on the *Israelites* for a failure in a Circumstance of outward Order, how much more may a Breach be expected in the room of a Blessing, where the inward Order and due Frame of the Soul is neglected, in our drawing nigh to God? The Lord hath appointed not only the *matter* of Duties, but also their *manner* of performance: Obedience in both must be joined, or we separate their Blessing from our Souls. We read what entertainment those find with *God* who observe his ways in seeking him; *Isa. 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh Righteousness; those that remember thee in thy Ways.* What was *God's* meeting them here, but their meeting with the promised and expected Blessing?

One special part of the due Frame of their Souls was, that they wrought Righteousness with rejoicing: his Ways were not a burthen and weariness, but a delight to them. A dead dull Heart in Duties is a
disor-

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disorderly Heart, that will make but *poor earnings*. *Ye shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your Heart.* Chearfulness and Integrity are but the Order and Manner of performing Duties, yet the Promise is to them.

If we go over the several Ordinances, we shall find this true. In the *Word*, God is to be sought; yet if the *manner* be not duly performed, we shall meet with a *rebuke*. Thus it was with the *Jews*, Isa. 58. 2. they delighted to approach to God, they *asked the Ordinances of Justice*: but in the mean time they indulged to their Lusts, and were unmerciful to others: and therefore God upbraids them with their Duties, and spreads them as Dung upon their Faces. *Prayer* is a Blessed Ordinance, yet if not rightly ordered it becomes Sin. And how great a Curse is it, to have our *very Duties* become Sin? *Let his Prayer become Sin*, Psal. 109. 7. was one of the heaviest Judgments that *David* imprecated on the worst of his and the Lord's Adversaries. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?* So in *Fasting*, *Is this the Fast that I have chosen?* In the Sacrament of the Passover, *Judas* not having his Heart right with God when he received the Sop;

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instead of the Lord Christ, he received the Devil with it. *Then entred Satan into Judas, Luke 22. 3.* A sad breach by which the Devil enters! *Judas being an evil Man (saith Augustin) received a good thing in a bad manner, and therefore the Enemy entred with it. Aug. Tract. in John 17. 26.* He that eats *unworthily*, and drinks *unworthily*, at the Lord's Table, *eats and drinks damnation to himself, 1 Cor. 11. 29, 30.* or, he eats and drinks *Judgment*, as the Greek word *κῆρυμα* may be rendred. God will shew his displeasure against such a Man. The disorderly manner of attending this Ordinance, was the cause, that amongst the *Corinthians many were weak and sickly, and many slept, yea, slept their last.*

The grounds of this Truth are these.

First, *All God's Law is Copulative.* And therefore the Commands, *Deut. 5. 17, 18, 19, &c.* are all expressed with a *Copulative*, joining them together in a continued Connexion. **לֹא תרעה ולא תחאט ולא תגנב** *Thou shalt not Kill, and thou shalt not commit Adultery, and thou shalt not Steal.* The breaking of one Command, breaks the whole chain of the Law. Now the same Law of God that commands Ordinances, commands also the due Order in their Performance. In the Old Testament-Sacrifices,

crifices, so much as the *Wood* must be laid in order, Levit. 1. 7, 8. Gen. 22. 9. how much more the *Heart*, in those Ordinances that are more purely Evangelical, and Spiritual? *That is not a good Action perfectly wherein all the good Qualities pertaining to it do not concur; Etjinaz.* God expects Perfection: *It shall be perfect, to be accepted: there shall be no blemish therein,* Levit. 22. 21. The Sacrifices indeed (being Types of Christ) did express by their Perfection the necessity of Christ's spotless Holiness, to render him an effectual propitiatory Sacrifice for us: yet though the like Perfection in our personal Righteousness, be not necessary to our acceptation with God; it is notwithstanding our Duty: and the wilful continued neglect of it, is inconsistent with that sincere Obedience of Faith, without which our Persons & Services will not be accepted; no, not for Christ's sake. Acceptation with God is no mean Mercy, nor the least to be aimed at in holy Duties. *Abel* was blessed *with it*, when *Cain* went *without it*; which made *Cain's* heart boil with envy, malice, and revenge: being sensible how much thereby *Abel* was a better and a happier Man than himself. This may suffice to demonstrate and convince, that in our attending upon the Lord in his Ordinances,

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it stands us upon to be greatly concerned in their, and especially our Order and Frame : that we may avoid the Breach, and meet with the Blessing.

Use 1.

*This serves to inform us, why it often fares so ill with us ; in and after our seeking the Lord in his Ordinances. God hath promised to make his People joyful in his House of Prayer, Isa. 56. 7. He hath commanded to take, eat and drink his Body and Blood ; and he hath annexed a blessing to it : But it may be thou meetest not with these Blessings of Joy, quicknings, growth in Grace, confidence in God, assurance of his favour. Is it without a cause ? yea, without a cause on thy part ? Surely no, thy Heart hath bin out of a due Order, thou hast neglected God's Method, and therefore God hath neglected thee ; or rebuked thee, and sent thee away with a sad, drooping, or (which is worse) a dead Heart. The Table of the Lord hath written upon it to thee, *Perez Uzza*, or rather *Perez Nephesh*, a Breach on thy Soul. God's Ordinances are as effectual as ever, and God as faithful as ever. Call thy Soul to account therefore ; was there that Prayer, Humiliation, Repentance,*

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tance, quickning of thy Faith before-hand ; as should have bin ? If not, thou knowest at whose Door to lay the miscarriage of the Blessing.

Use 2.

This may teach us, not to satisfy our selves with the matter of Ordinances, or their formal outward exercise ; but to look after whatever God requires therein. Men have a high esteem of the Lord's Supper, and that not unworthily : but most have little regard to that Order of it, and their own Souls ; that may bring down the Benefit. Too many are open to the Complaints of Chrysostom ad Epiphan. Hom. 3. I see many that partake of the Sacrament inconsiderately and rashly, more out of Custom and Law, than Understanding. Times of Receiving make not a worthy Receiver, but the sincerity and purity of the Soul ; always come with that, never without it.

God will deal with such disorderly Communicants, according to the words in Job 20. 23. *When he is about to fill his Belly, God shall cast the fury of his Wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. Christ's Body and Blood thus sawced, will be but bitter Food.* Who would have had

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the *Israelites* meat, with the Wrath of God? *Psal. 78. 29.* An undue Order in the Lord's Supper, makes that Table prepared for our *welfare* to become a Trap and a Snare, *Psal. 69. 22.* *Haman's* jollity and brags, met not with a sadder issue and disappointment, than their confidence is like to do, who rush on this Sacred Ordinance without order or fear. The Banquet of Wine was the merriest part of the Feast, yet at that *Haman* drank the Sentence of Death. The Lord will say to such, as *Nabal* to *David's* Servants, Who are ye? and whence are ye? Shall I take my Sacramental Bread, my Son's Flesh and Blood which I have prepared for my Children, my prepared Guests, my Guests with their Wedding-Garments on, and give it to a Company of Persons, I know not whence they are? No, here is not for you, be gone, and meddle not, lest you meet with a Curse, and not a Blessing. Therefore in the Fear of God look to it, be no less consciencious, and solicitous of coming in a Holy Order, than of coming to a Holy Ordinance.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

*Of Preparation before the Sacrament ;
and the necessity of it.*

IT will not be amiss now to consider, what is that due Order, that holy and spiritual Manner, after which the Lord is to be sought in the Sacrament. This consists especially in three kinds of Duties : First, Such as go before ; 2. Such as accompany ; 3. Such as follow after Receiving. The Duties before Receiving, may pass under the notion of Preparation, with which I shall begin.

Preparation, as it is a means to get the Heart in order for the Lord's Table, so it is the first Duty in order to it. *Take heed to thy foot when thou comest into the House of God, Eccles. 5. 1.* 'Tis ill stumbling at the threshold of an Ordinance. But if such heed must be taken when we come to the House, how much more when we come to the Table of the Lord, where he himself sits as Master of the Feast ? *Sanctify yourselves (saith Samuel) and come with me to the Sacrifice.* Sanctification is preparatory to eating of the Sacrifice, and no less in our

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feeding on that great Sacrifice for Sin, to which all the *Mosaical* were but shadows. It was a Saint-like saying of *David*, *Psal.* 26.6. *I will wash my hands in Innocency. So will I compass thine Altar, O Lord.* There is much in the Word *So, So let him Eat,* *1 Cor.* 11. The Preparation of the Passover was a necessary and solemn Work, *Exod.* 12.3. and that was the *Jews* Sacrament, by which they were minded of their being passed by in the destruction of the First-Born of *Egypt*; but more especially of the deliverance from Death, and eternal Ruin, by the *Messias*, the Lamb slain from the beginning: of which Deliverance and Passover, that in *Egypt* was a Type. And it certainly teacheth us, that Preparation is no less necessary to the eating Christ our Passover by Faith, in the Gospel-Sacrament; to do which, after a due Spiritual manner, is much more difficult, as the Gospel-Sacrament is a much more excellent and spiritual Ordinance.

When we are invited to our Neighbours Table, how do we deck and spruce ourselves? Our ordinary Apparel and Attire will not serve our turn: and is the Lord's Table a more despicable thing? or our uncomely Raiment at his Communion less distastful to him, or dishonourable both to

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to him and our selves? It cannot be thought so by any that understand. Too many are as ignorantly bold in this, as the Disciples in another case. *Are you able* (saith Christ) *to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of?* We know how roundly, but rashly they answered, *We are able*, Mat. 20. 22. So many poor wretches, if we ask them, *Are ye able?* are ye fit to receive Christ in the Supper? They are so confident of their worthiness and ability, that they are offended at the very Question: whereas the Lord knows they never yet bestowed one poor hour in examining their State, and preparing their Hearts for so solemn a Work. Our Lord Jesus bids the *Pharisees wash the inside of the Cup, that the outside of the Cup may be clean also*. But many (especially of the common, young, or time-serving Receivers) take the quite contrary course; and think, if all be trim without, no care need be taken about the Spots and Pollutions within: but Christ, the Lord of the Feast, hath too spiritual and piercing an Eye, to be put off with a cleanness that is not so much as Skin-deep, much less Heart and Soul-deep. To quicken us to this Preparation, consider these things:

First, *According to a Man's Preparation will be his profit*. Preparation is the Seed,
recei-

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receiving the *Harvest*. He that sows *nothing*, reaps *nothing*; and he that sows *sparingly*, shall reap *sparingly*. 'Tis in receiving as in praying, he that prepares his Heart to pray, finds God with a ready Ear, *Psal. 10. 17.* God enlargeth his Hand to Receivers, as their Hearts are enlarged to receive. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, Psal. 81. 10.* If ever we are straitned in our Blessings at the Lord's Table, 'tis not from the straitness of God's Heart or Hand, but of our own Bowels. *Fill the Mens Sacks with Food as much as they can carry, Gen. 44. 1.* saith Joseph of his Brethren. How much more will our Jesus be liberal, according to the largeness of Heart we bring with us? *Sacraments are the Mines of Grace, holy Dispositions are our little Vessels; the larger our Dispositions and holy Affections are, the greater Blessing shall we carry away with us from these Mines of Blessing.* Euseb. Neirem.

Secondly, *We come in this Ordinance to meet and serve God.* Whether we are to meet God in a way of Judgment or Mercy, that Exhortation holds, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, Amos 4. 12.* In cases of Judgment and Displeasure, God will meet with Men tho they be not prepared, yea because they prepare not: but in case of a Blessing,

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no preparation, no meeting; *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you*, Jam. 4. There must be a mutual drawing near, if ever God and the Soul meet. *Now ye have consecrated your selves to the Lord, come near and bring your Sacrifices*, 2 Chron. 29. 31. Consecration to God is the highest preparation, it includes Faith, Love, Repentance, Trust; without which no Man can devote and separate himself to be the Lord's. And where this Consecration to Christ makes us his, and we are sensible of it, and wise to improve it, it will be an easie Matter for Faith to say, *my Beloved is mine*: and this well proved and applyed, a Door is wide open to all the Fruits which grow on that Tree of Life.

Thirdly, *To prepare our selves Religiously, is a comfortable sign of Uprightness and sincerity of Heart*. The Levites were more ready to sanctify themselves for the Passover than the Priests; 2 Chron. 29. 34. The reason given was this, *Because they were more upright in heart*. Therefore it follows, that the more upright in heart in the Lord's Ordinance, the more ready and diligent shall we be in preparation. This is also fruitful of another Blessing, expressed in *David's Prayer, Do good, O Lord, to those that*

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that be good; and to them that are upright in Heart.

Fourthly, *No Man can come so worthily as he ought.* Do we what we can, too much dulness, deadness, and distraction, will be our Companions, and such as will not wholly be shaken off. But yet this is our encouragement, that if the Lord sees a Man set himself seriously to a preparation, he will bear with many failings, *2 Chron. 30. 18, 19.* Many had eaten the Passeeover in an undue manner, they wanted some Ceremonial Cleanings, and no doubt but their Hearts had their spots and defects too; Yet *Hezekiah* prays, *The good Lord pardon every one that prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the preparation of the Sanctuary.* And what was the success of this Prayer, *vers. 20, 21.* *And the Lord healed the People, and they kept the Feast with gladness.* Behold how gracious the Lord is to such whose Hearts are set on preparation for his Ordinances. Here was God's Service set in order, and the Hearts of his Servants set in order: and it follows, *Hezekiah, and all the People rejoiced.*

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

Of the great Danger of coming to the Lord's Supper, without Preparation.

THe things already offered might be sufficient, but because our careless withdrawing Hearts are not easily prevail'd on ; we shall try what Fear or shame may contribute to this Duty. First, *It is matter of shame.* Austin upbraids the unreasonableness of those, who would be ashamed of Filth and Tatters at a great Man's Table, and yet blush not at their sinful Pollutions and Beggary at the Lord's Table, *Serm. 151 de Temp.* Consider 2 Chron. 30. 15. *The Priests and the Levites were ashamed, and Sanctified themselves.* They were ashamed for the newness of the Work, at which 'tis like they both blushed and bungled in the face of a multitude of People : but chiefly, that through their ignorance and unfaithfulness it had bin so long discontinued. We cannot away with foul Cloaths and Vessels at our Tables, and will God away with foul Hearts ? O be ashamed to bring
such

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such vessels, to receive the Wine & Milk of Spiritual Mercies into. Let not God & your own Souls be so ill served and respected.

Secondly, *'Tis a Matter of great danger*: And the Dangers are these that follow. First, *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*. These are the Apostle's Words, 1 Cor. 15. 27. What is this, but instead of becoming guiltless by the Death of Christ, to become guilty of the Death of Christ's Blood? instead of drinking the Cordial of Christ's Blood, to shed Christ's Blood? A Sin that will be more heavy than all others, as 'tis a Sin against, and contempt of the Remedy. *Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, says David, Psal. 51.* The guilt of Man's Blood is a heavy Burthen; What then is the guilt of the Blood of Christ, the Blood of God? 'Tis well for Sinners that there is Virtue enough in Christ's Blood, to wash away the guilt of Christ's Blood, *Acts 2.* for how many had made their Misery incurable, by abusing the Physician! yea, well for Saints too, who though as Saints have a right to Christ in the Sacraments, yet in the manner of receiving, contract guilt too often on their Souls, which nothing, without the Christ they dishonour, can do away.

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away. *His Blood be upon us, and upon our Children*, was a dreadful imprecation of the Christ-crucifying *Jews*, whose dire effects have taken hold of their Posterity for sixteen hundred Years already. O take heed, above all things, of having Christ's Blood crying out against thee! Christ's Blood duly applyed by Faith, speaks better things than the Blood of *Abel*; but if abused, cries more loud for a more terrible revenge. Well then might *Chrysost.* resolve thus, *I will rather give my Life, than I will give the Body of Christ to any unworthy Person; yea, I will rather suffer my own Blood to be shed, than I will give that most holy Blood to the Unworthy.*

The second Danger is, *That an unprepared Person not only receives no good, but much hurt to his Soul.* God blasts his Ordinance to such a One. *Bring no more vain Oblations*, Isa. 1. 13. *Vain*, not only as not acceptable to God, but also as unprofitable to them. They are *vain things which cannot profit*, 1 Sam. 12. 21. The same Curse is upon an unworthy Receiver, that was on that Lord of *Samaria*, 2 Kings 7. 2. *Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.* He that appears empty before the Lord, shall go away as empty as he comes. An unprepared, an unworthy Receiver, may think he eats Christ's
Flesh

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Flesh, and drinks Christ's Blood, but he is but in a dream, according to those *Isa. 20. 8.* When he awakes, he will behold his Soul empty; he is neither the fatter, fairer, nor stronger, for his Festival Dream. *Cyprian de Cena Dom.* speaks to the purpose; *The Sacrament is never without its proper virtue, nor is the Majesty of God absent from his Holy Mysteries, yet they cannot partake of the Holy Spirit of the Ordinance, whose unbelief or unworthiness is a contradiction to so Holy a Thing.*

But moreover, where no good is gotten by Ordinances, it cannot be without hurt; we must be either the better or the worse. This was the *Corinthians* sin & misery, they came together to this Ordinance, *not for the better, but for the worse, 1 Cor. 11. 17.* There is a double Spiritual Danger in receiving the Spiritual Sacrament disorderly and unworthily. First, Instead of receiving Christ, we receive Satan. Of this we spake before. 'Tis the way to receive Satan's Power to a greater hardning. Satan no doubt possessed *Judas* before he was one of his Subjects: but after the Sop, Satan took a more full possession. The greatest villany that ever was acted on the Stage of the World, did not stick with him now. To rise up from the Lord's Table with
greater

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greater greediness and eagerness to Sin, is an aggravating Circumstance, and a Judgment unexpressibly sore. If thy Heart tremble at the thoughts of such an Issue to this blessed Ordinance, let it tremble no less at the Cause; an unworthy, neglected, unprepared Heart.

A second Spiritual Danger is, *A receiving Judgment and Condemnation to our selves*, 1 Cor. 11. 29. The Paschal Lamb must not be eaten raw, *Exod. 12. 9.* Uzzah's good intention in supporting the Ark, could not save him from the punishment of his disorder. Unpreparedness puts Death into the Pot. The Emperor, *Henry the 7th*, was poisoned in the Bread of the *Sacrament* by a treacherous Monk, for his not being so flexible to the *Roman Yoke*, as the proud Pope expected. And Pope *Victor the 2d* had the same entertainment, from his Sub-Deacon, in the Cup of the *Sacrament*. The Improvement I aim at in these Passages, is to shew that Sacramental Bread and Wine may be death to the receivers Souls by their own Treachery, as they were to those great Men's Bodies, by the treachery and villany of their Popish Priests.

The Physician (saith Aug.) doth not administer Poison, but Health; but an unworthy receiving renders it ruinous. The Devil
would

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would have had our Saviour turn *Stones* into *Bread*; but unworthy Receivers turn the Bread of the best Life into *Stones*. They take not up the Cup of *Salvation*, but of *Damnation*. But that no sincere humble Soul may construe this Head to their discouragement, and *unnecessary* trouble; consider, That although every Sin deserve *Eternal* Damnation, yet no Sin repented of *Evangelically* shall condemn. Secondly, That the word *κρίμα* signifies *Judgment*, as well *Temporal*, as *Spiritual* or *Eternal*: so that the Sence is, they provoke God to afflict and send down his Judgments upon them. Thirdly, That the unworthy receiving, which the Apostle (in *1 Cor. 11.*) so severely rebukes, is not to be understood of those Infirmities which *ordinarily* cleave to God's dearest and tender-hearted Children, notwithstanding their sincere care and watchfulness: but of those *gross* disorders, and such-like mentioned in that Chapter, which were a high profanation and *contempt* of this Holy Ordinance. Gospel Worship and Services are not such *severe* things, as to be accompanied with such terrible Apprehensions, where the Heart is upright and reverent in their performance.

The third Danger is of Judgments on the Body :

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Body : Sicknes, Weaknes, yea Death it self. For this cause many are sickly among you, and many are weak, and many sleep, 1 Cor. 11. 30. Some think it was the Pestilence that God sent amongst them ; but at least, it was some extraordinary and signal Mortality. This unworthy receiving may be the cause of bodily Judgments, where Men little think of it : For God hath now the same jealous Eye over his Ordinances as then ; and his Glory concerned in their due attendance, is as dear to him. *If we would judge our selves* (saith the Apostle) *we should not be judged*, 1 Cor. 11. 31. That is, if we would try and censure our selves, we should avoid the Punishment, even that Punishment and Condemnation by which God chastises his People for their gross Miscarriages, that they might repent, reform, and not perish eternally : as appears by the next verse, *But when we are judged* (or punished as some read it) *we are chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the World.*

Some there are who regard not *Spiritual* Judgments, yet are tender enough of their *Bodily* Welfare : let temporal Dangers make such look about them. When God cast *Adam* out of *Paradise*, he set an Angel with a flaming Sword to prevent his re-entry ;

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entry ; if he had presumed, he had run upon his own Death. Let not those menaces which God presents in his Word to you, meet with less regard. I shall give you here a few Instances of God's Vengeance upon the high and contumacious Prophanners of his Ordinance. *Julian*, Uncle to *Julian* the Apostate an Emperor, pissed on the Communion Table, and smote *Euzoius* the Bishop for reproving him ; saying also, that *the Divine Providence took no care at all of Christian's Affairs* : But God gave him the lye, by making his Excrements forsake the common passages of Nature, and pass through that wicked Mouth that had so abused Him, his People, and Ordinance. *Cent. Magdeb.* Cent. 4. C. 3. Some of the *Donatists*, that cast the Consecrated Bread to Dogs, were themselves devoured by Dogs. One *Booth*, a Batchelor of Arts in *St. John's College Cambridg*, being Popishly affected, reserved the Sacrament, and threw it over the College Wall in scorn : but God so rebuked his Conscience, that shortly after, he in anguish threw himself over the Battlements of the Chappel, and in few hours after ended his life ; this the Bishop of *Durham* reports on his own knowledg, in his Book of *The Institution of Sacraments*, Lib. 5. C. 3. Sect. 5. Although

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though these were Sinners of another kind than unworthy Receivers, yet the jealous Eye of God over this Ordinance, may teach us not to provoke him by its abuse in any manner or measure.

Fourthly; Yet consider, *That it is a very dangerous thing for those who fear God, to neglect attending on this Ordinance.* While others receive unworthily, they who neglect it, do constructively condemn it as unworthy to be received. The Sentence against such who neglected the Passeeover was severe. *But the Man that is clean, and is not in a Journey, and forbears to keep the Passeeover; even the same Soul shall be cut off from his People, because he brought not the Offering of the Lord in his appointed Season; that Man shall bear his Sin.* Numb. 9. 13. How hard went it with those, *Mat. 25. 5, 7.* who being invited, came not to the Supper? 'Tis very dangerous to reject or neglect the Lord's Bounty. There is a punishment for them who ought to come, and come not, as well as for those who come not as they ought; for a prophane Absence, as well as for an unprepared Presence.

C H A P. IV.

Of Habitual and Actual Preparation in general, and of the necessity of knowledge in a Communicant.

THe Preparation required before the Sacrament is two-fold, *Habitual*, and *Actual*. *Habitual* stands in having all such gracious Dispositions, as qualify for the work of receiving; *Actual* in the *awakening* those Dispositions to a readiness for Exercise: both these must be in him that will receive in due Order. It is here as in Preaching; a Preacher ought to have such Gifts, Graces, & Abilities, as may furnish him for his Ministerial Work; he must be a Man well-read and studied, and of competent Learning; yet he that is thus accomplished ought not ordinarily, without any study, step into the Pulpit, take a Text, and utter himself at all adventure: But besides his Habitual Preparation, an understanding and serious Minister, who knows the weight and difficulty of his Work, will take special pains by Study and Prayer, to fit him for every particular and occasional Exercise of his Habitual fitness and qualifications.

cations. Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, bringeth out of his Treasure things new and old, Matth. 13. 52. He hath a Treasure, there is his Habitual Preparation; he brings it forth, first by study or meditation, e're he preaches it to the People, there is his Actual Preparation. Without Habitual Preparation his Sermons would prove poor empty stuff, or worse; without Actual he not only tempts God (if he have opportunity) but 'tis ten to one his Products will be wild and confused, such as the words of that Prophecie well agree to, Zech. 13. 4. *It shall come to pass in that day, that the Prophets shall be ashamed every one of his Vision, when he hath Prophesied.*

Mark how the Ruler of the Synagogue spake to Paul and his Companions, Acts 13. 15. *Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, say on.* As if he had said, if ye be provided of a Sermon, if ye have any Meditations ready, bestow them on the People. He did not tempt them to vent whatever came next in extemporary indigested Effusions. So the Apostile exhorted Timothy to Study *to shew himself approved, a Work-man that needs not to be ashamed,* 2 Tim. 2. 15. To apply these things to the case in hand,

there must be in all Holy Duties, both Habitual and Actual Preparation, or the success of the Troops of Tema will be the issue, Job 6. 19, 20. *The Troops of Tema looked, and the Companies of Sheba waited for them; they were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed.* It is also to be understood, that Habitual Preparation must be had in the first place, without which there can be no Actual Preparation, any more than a readiness to work without Hands or Tools. I now proceed to those particular Graces, wherein consists the Habitual Preparation for receiving this Holy and Blessed Ordinance: among others, I shall take notice of these five, viz. *Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Charity, Obedience.* The want of any of these, will render a Person unworthy and disorderly in the attendance on this Sacred Ordinance.

The Necessity of Knowledge in a Worthy Communicant.

THe Apostle renders Defective Knowledge in a Communicant, no small Crime, where the defect is such as is inconsistent with the due and sacred Apprehension of so solemn an Ordinance. *Not dis-*

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discerning the Lord's Body, 1 Cor. 11. 29. (i. e.) not distinguishing between the Elements in the Sacraments, & common food : or not having an understanding and sense of the Ends and Benefits of a Crucified Jesus, exhibited in the Lord's Supper. This Defect must needs be, where there remains a deep ignorance of the very Fundamentals of Religion. There can be no competent understanding of Christ in this Ordinance, where there is a gross ignorance of Sin, and its Defilements, and its Merits, the Fall of Mankind in the first Sin of our first Parents, and of our selves in particular by our personal Sins, the Redemption by Christ's Active and Passive Obedience to Sanctification and Salvation ; a Reunion with God, a Communion with him and all Saints, who are the Members of Christ, and one of another ; a conscientious, grateful, and chearful devotedness to the Lord, in all those ways of Obedience commanded and directed to in his Holy Word.

That a competent Knowledg is necessary to the receiving, will appear by these following Reasons. First, *The Lord prizes Knowledg above the outward Acts of his Service.* If Knowledg and some Ordinances might be separated, as sometimes they have bin of necessity, as in cases of Persecution, Exile,

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Sickness ;

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sickness: the sanctifying Knowledg of God without those Ordinances, weighs more with him, than the external performance of them without Knowledg. *I desired the Knowledg of God more than Burnt-Offerings*, Hosea 6. 6. To know God and Christ, or God in Christ, is Eternal Life, *John* 17. 3. this may be where God hath not given opportunities of receiving Christ in the Sacrament; but 'tis no where said that the outward Acts of this or any other Ordinance is Eternal Life.

Secondly, *A Man should receive the Supper with such a frame as he would be fit to die in.* For a Man to die without the Knowledg of God and Christ, is a woful thing, and exprest as a Curse that cuts off all Blessings or Hopes at one blow. *They shall die without Knowledg*, *Job* 36. 12. It is no less evil, than *ye shall die in your Sins*, *John* 8. 21. What makes a Man unfit to die, makes a Man unfit to receive; and what-ever state is dangerous to die in, is dangerous to receive in.

The third Reason is, *From the ends of our coming to this Feast*, and that is Communion with God. Without Communion with God, this Ordinance is an empty thing. And what Communion can there be

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be without Knowledg? Where the Knowledg of God is wanting, Men can be no better than Strangers to him; *Alienated from the Life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*, Ephes. 4. 18. A Man may have Knowledg and no Communion, but a Man can have no Communion with God without Knowledg. *This is the Covenant which I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my Law into their Mind, and write it on their Hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my People.* The substance of the good of the Covenant, mutual Interest and Communion, depends on the Holy Knowledg of God.

A fourth Reason is, from *the unsfitness to receive without Knowledg*. Where a Man is without Knowledg, he is out of Covenant with God. Not a Person in Covenant but is taught of God. *They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them*, Heb. 8. 11. All God's Children are Disciples, and such Disciples who have learned Christ in some good measure; though they are never too old or too wise to learn more. Now this Ordinance is a Sealing Ordinance, 'tis a Seal of the Covenant; and they who are not Interested in the Covenant, are utterly incapable of its

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Seal : the Seal should be no better to them than a Seal on a Paper that hath nothing written on't.

Secondly, *None are fit but such as are Members of Christ ; and no such ignorant Persons are Members of Christ.* Where-ever the Gospel joins the Soul to Christ, 'tis by Beams of Light, as well as by Flames of Love. *To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18.* Now are such fit for the Lord's Table, who are the Devil's Subjects and Vassals ? and who not being Members of the Body, have no Communion in that Life and Ver-
 tue conveyed by this Spiritual Ordinance, from Christ as their Head and Heart ? The Blessing of the Blood of Christ keeps its Circulation within its Mystical Body, as common Blood doth in the Natural : if it be let out of the Body, it grows cold and lifeless.

Thirdly, *Ignorant Persons are Lepers.* The Law denied Civil Society to a Leper : and Ignorance is the height of Spiritual Leprosie. *Levit. 13. 44. The Priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, the Plague is in his Head.* There are two things that shut out Ignorant Persons from this Ordinance ; first, *Such are Children, yea and Fools too, which is worse.* A Child or a Fool can
 neither

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neither examine himself, nor is capable of giving satisfaction to the Minister; both which are necessary to save the Conscience of him that Administers, and him that Receives. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him come.* And secondly, *No ignorant Person can come with a good Mind.* Now to bring an Offering with an ill Mind, is an Abomination to the Lord, *Prov. 21. 27.* Ignorant Persons will plead, their good Meanings, and good Hearts, come not short of those who have better Heads: true, where there is some competency of Knowledge sanctified; a Woman, a Child, may have a better Heart and Devotion than the most Eagle-ey'd Person in the Notions of Godliness, where the Heart is yet Carnal: but where Ignorance is so gross, as not to admit some knowledge of the first Principles of the Oracles of God, that Text is applicable, *Without Knowledge the Mind is not good, Prov. 19. 2.* The first thing that God called *good* in the Creation, was Light; and after that all he made was Good. Before that, though there was a vastness of Matter, yet it is without form and void: Void of Goodness, Beauty, or Use. Therefore let all Ignorant Souls take heed what they do, in presuming themselves, without warrant or fitness, or censuring their faith-

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ful Ministers for excluding them: they are your Eyes, your Seers, if they see the danger and warn you, it will rather become you to consider with Self-suspicion, than to storm at their Faithfulness, as if it were an affront to your worth. O the Pride of Man! who scorns to be judged ignorant, and yet scorns or loaths as much to be taught, who will needs be thought fit for the highest Mysteries of the Gospel, and yet never thought good to take so much pains as to understand the A B C of Religion. *What hast thou (of all Men) to do to take my Covenant into thy Mouth; seeing thou hatest Instruction?* Psal. 50. 16, 17. If not the Words, how much less the Seal of the Covenant.

C H A P. V.

Of the Necessity of Faith in him who may be a Worthy Receiver.

FAith is the Heart-purifying Grace, that disposes to draw near to God, fits for acceptance with him, and takes hold of the pure Blessings of his Ordinances. The Lord throws all the formal Services, tendered with polluted Hearts, into the Faces of their

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their Offerers. Isa. 1. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices? — I cannot away with your New Moons, &c. Why? what was the Matter? Did not God require them? Was he weary of his own Worship? Did he hate his own Ordinances? No, but they offered them with polluted Hearts. God bids them therefore V. 16, 18. Wash you, make you clean, — come now, &c. But how should they wash, except by Faith in the Blood of Christ, which purges from the guilt and filth of Sin. Let us draw near with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, &c. It is no less sin to come without Faith, than not to come at all. However freely God offers his Favours, if we want Faith, we have no hand, (or if you will) no heart to receive them. The whole Action of a Christian in this Ordinance, is but Faith appropriating and applying the Blessings there tendered, and what results from thence. Only mistake not this Belief for a meer persuasion of your Interest, but rather take it for an open Heart to receive Christ as tendered in the Covenant: the persuasion of your Interest, and its Comforts will follow from the evidence of your such willingness. And also observe, that as this Ordinance is called*

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led the Communion, so it includes a reciprocal and mutual donation. Christ gives himself to the Soul, and Faith receives him : and the same Faith gives the Soul to Christ again, and thereby all it is, or hath. Faith hath two hands, one to receive, another to give : 'tis not a selfish thing. At this Holy Feast, the Cheer is made up betwixt Christ and Believers : Believers Feast on Christ's Benefits, and Christ feeds on Believers' Graces, all of which (especially Faith) labour and lay out all, on, and for their dearest Lord and Redeemer. How all this can be performed without true Faith, is a Riddle not resolved in the Scriptures.

This Righteousness is the Wedding-Garment, and the Acts of Faith dress the Soul with the Varieties of Glory, which are the Fruits and Consequences of it. To come without this Wedding-Garment, produces a sentence of Death ; to come with it (as every gracious Soul is never without it in its worst state) but not in exercise or improved, will meet with a hidden Face from God, or a frown. In the Parable, *Mat. 22. 4, 5.* The Lord spies out one not having on the Wedding-Garment ; and though he calls him Friend, he fares little the better for that ; his Entertainment is binding Hand and Foot, and casting into utter darkness.

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The Worthy Communicant. 37

The special things to my purpose observable in this Parable are, When the Guests were come, the King comes in to see them. The Lord keeps not open House here. As in preaching the Word all are invited to entertain the Gospel, and thereby to come into the Dominion and Protection of Christ; but all are not invited to this Supper. Christ calls them by name, I mean, his *Children*, his *Saints*, who have already put on Christ, in obedience to the Gospel-Call: If any other intrude, Christ knows his own, he can miss any one that should be there, and take notice of his Place being empty: and he also can find out, and will, if there be but one that is not of the number of his Sheep in those Pastures. The necessity of Faith in this Ordinance, I shall farther evidence in the following Considerations.

First, *No Duty is acceptable to God without Faith.* Better absent than present where not accepted. By Faith *Abel* and his Offering was accepted, (*Gen. 4. 4. Heb. 11. 4.*) while faithless *Cain's* found no regard from God. He was not pleased with all alike who *ate of the same Spiritual Meat, and drank of the same Spiritual Drink*, 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5. 'Tis Faith in the habit and
exerc-

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exercise that makes the difference for the better.

Secondly, *Our end in receiving should be, to partake of Christ's Body and Blood: But this cannot be without Faith.* Popish *Transubstantiation* is a meer blasphemous fiction, that so joins the Body and Blood of Christ to the Bread and Wine, or rather pretends so to turn them into the very Body and Blood of Christ, that be a Man never so wicked, were he an *Infidel, Turk, or Jew*; if he swallow the *Accidents*, (as the Papists call them) he receives the Body and Blood of Christ. *We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence, &c. Heb. 3. 14. τῆς ἰσχυροῦς πίστεως, the beginning of our Substance, (i. e.) our Faith, or that Trust in Christ by which we were encouraged to cast our selves upon him as Lord and Saviour: to expect Salvation from Christ in the ways of the Obedience of Faith, which is the substantial Christianity: A Christianity and Saintship that hath more in it, than a name and form of Godliness. This Substance of Faith is necessary to a partaking of Christ, real Christ, Christ effectual.*

First, *We cannot partake of Christ in the Supper without Faith*; for he that receives Christ, must have an eye to discern his
Worth,

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Worth, and Excellency ; a Heart to come to him, a Hand to receive him, a Taste to relish and savour him ; all these Faith is to the Soul, and without Faith it is destitute of all these helps. *Look unto me and be saved*, Isa. 45. 22. This word *look*, denotes a having respect to Christ in all his saving Properties. *As many as received him*, John 1. 12. is construed in the following words, *to as many as believed on his Name* : So that receiving Christ, is the very Act of Faith ; or rather Faith it Self. Christ is a Rich Treasury, all we want is to be had in, and from him : He is Gold, Raiment, Eye-Salve ; if we will have these Blessings, Faith is all the purchase on our parts ; and nothing without it will procure the least share in Christ, who is the Substance, the All of Ordinances.

Secondly, *We ought not to attempt to partake of Christ in the Supper, till we are interested in Christ by Faith*. None were to eat of the Sin-Offering but the Priests. All Believers, and none but Believers, are Priests to God. *Ye are an holy Priesthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. But how came they to be Priests ? it was by coming to Christ by Faith ; vers. 4. *To whom coming*. So also none but God's Children have a right to Christ, and none can be Children without Faith. *To*

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as many as received him, he gave this priviledg, to become the Sons of God, John 1. 12. that is, to as many as believed. Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 16. God will not cast the Childrens Bread to Dogs: Crums of temporary and carnal Comforts must serve their turns. 'Tis only the Household of Faith who have right to that Table; where the Lord Jesus is not only the Master, but also the Matter of the Feast.

Thirdly, Consider *the danger of coming without Faith.* First, *Without Faith, the Heart is not only in a polluted, but also in a polluting state.* Every Person in an unregenerate state, pollutes all the Ordinances he is exercised about (though not to others, yet) to himself. Where Holy Ordinances have not sanctified defiled Persons, they will defile Holy Ordinances. In the Ceremonial Law, a Person defiled by a dead Body, touching Holy Flesh, (*i. e.* of the Sacrifice) made it unclean thereby, *Hag. 2. 13.* This is farther improved, *vers. 14.* *So is this People, and so is this Nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every Work of their hands, and that which they offer there, is unclean.* What safety, much less encouragement, can a Man expect from God, who
defiles

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defiles that Ordinance of God, wherein he hopes for a Blessing?

Secondly, *Coming without Faith, makes our coming abominable to God.* All Service performed out of Christ, is loathsome. The Altar sanctifies the Gift. The Sacrifices not brought to the Door of the Tabernacle, and their Blood sprinkled on the Altar, were called by God, *Sacrifices unto Devils*, Levit. 17. 6, 7. Who is the Altar, and the Door of Sanctification and Acceptation, but the Lord Jesus, intended by those Types? The Lord saith in this case, as *Joseph* to his Brethren; *Ye shall not see my Face, except you bring your Brother Benjamin with you*; so God will hide his Face from, or frown on all such as come to this Table to feed on Christ, and thereby to see the Light of God's Countenance, unless by Faith we bring Christ also with us in point of Interest.

Thirdly, *The state of Unbelief, is a state of Spiritual Death.* An Unbeliever is a dead Man, or a dead Woman. *I live by the Faith of the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. *As where the Soul is not in the Body, the Body is dead*; so where the Soul is without Faith, the Soul is dead, saith *Aug. Tract.* in *Johan.* Can you think it a small provocation, to bring a dead Carcase to a Feast? And is it less

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less to bring a dead Soul to the Lord's Table? A dead Soul, whose Corruption is so much the more loathsome as it is Spiritual.

Fourthly, *Unbelief takes away the force and virtue of the Ordinance.* If thou come to it lifeless by Unbelief, it will prove a dead Ordinance to thee.

Christ will say in this Ordinance to thy Soul, as he said to the Centurion, *Mat. 1. 13. As thou hast believed:* and as to the Blind Man, *Mat. 9. 29. Be it unto thee according to thy Faith.* Such a word to a Man full of Faith, would be a word full of Blessing: but to a Man utterly void of Faith, a cutting off from all Blessings by it. To receive Christ, and with him Grace, Comfort, and Glory, is neither thy desire, nor expectation from God: and none of these things shall be unto thee. Christ in the Sacrament shall be to such a Soul (as to the legally Circumcised as *Paul* speaks) of none effect. Unbelief doth, as it were, shut the Hands of Christ, and bind his Bowels from Compassion. *He could do no mighty Work there,* Mark 6. 5, 6. the Reason is given to be *their unbelief,* vers. 7. Christ could have done as much there as elsewhere; but he seems in a manner, to put himself under the Law of others Faith.

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The Sacrament received without Faith, is received without Force or Fruit. 'Tis with this as with the Word, 'tis very powerful and sweet where it works, where it prospers, and hath its proper effects; but as the Word profits not where *not mixed with Faith*, Heb. 4. 13. So 'tis with this Ordinance; Men's Unbelief strips it of its Blessing Powers. Faith draws out the Powers of this Ordinance, as the living Child draws the Milk out of the Brest, which a dead Child can never do. Faith makes the Soul to suck Hony out of that which is a Rock to others, and as barren and inexorable. The Papists say indeed, that, Faith is not necessary to make the Sacrament effectual, but its effects are *ex opera operato*: if the external Acts be performed, no matter how; but the Scripture speaks another Language. As 'tis said of the Man that asks without Faith, so it may be said of the Man that receives without Faith: *Let not that Man think, he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

C H A P. VI.

Of the Necessity of Repentance in a Communicant, that will Receive worthily and profitably.

IN this Point, both Sacraments, viz. of the Supper, and Baptism, have the same Requisites. Baptism is insignificant to the Adult, where Repentance proceeds not; so also in the Supper. Judging our selves is a special part of Repentance; and this the Apostle tells us (if practised) would prevent the displeasure that takes hold on unworthy Communicants. *If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged, (i. e. punished) 1 Cor. 11. 31. Draw nigh to God, (saith James) and he will draw nigh to you, James 4. 8.* But how should we thus effectually draw nigh to God? it follows in the 9th verse, *Cleanse your hands, ye Sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded: (i. e.) Let there be a Reformation of Heart and Life, Thoughts and Actions, and the Leaven of Hypocrisy (which is to be understood by double-mindedness) purged out; and then your drawing nigh to God in any*
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of his Ordinances will meet with a Blessing. It is observable, that when *Hezekiah* was about to keep the Passeeover, all the Uncleanness found in the House of the Lord was carried forth, and cast into the Brook *Kidron*, 2 Chron. 29. 16. This must be our Order in coming to the Sacrament; all Sin, which is spiritual Uncleanness, must be cast out of our love and purposes, by Faith and sincere Repentance. *Levit. 1. 9.* 'tis said of the Beast sacrificed, that his Inwards and his Legs must be washed in water. These do fitly express the Inward Affections, and Outward Actions; the Dispositions of the Soul, and the outward Conversation. *Wash thy heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem, how long shall vain thoughts lodg within thee?* Jer. 4. 14. In our daily walk we contract not only Soil and Filth on our Dispositions & Thoughts, but also Actual Guilt. As Faith, so Repentance must cleanse us from these, e're we can offer to the Lord a pure Offering, and have our Vessels so cleansed, as God will fill them with Heavenly Treasures. The *Pharisees* quarrelled with Christ, because his Disciples washed not their Hands before they ate Bread: and all because it answered not to the Traditions of the Elders. Commandments of Men are easily obeyed,
for

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for outward Actions by an Hypocrite; but to what purpose? The great necessity and difficulty, is washing *Heart and Life* from Spiritual Impurity; and this is to be done especially when we are to eat the Spiritual Bread, the Bread of Life, in this Ordinance. Take heed that herein ye transgress not the Commandments of the Lord.

Quest.

But what is that Repentance wherewith a Man must come? or how should he repent before he come to the Lord's Supper? This is indeed a thing worthy to be enquired after, and herein many deceive themselves foully. Repentance consists in a sorrow for sin, and an actual forsaking; but many mock God and gull their own Souls. Their Consciences tell them, that their Lives are so vile, that there must be somewhat done before they come, and therefore there must be some sorrow, or shew of sorrow at least, before their Receiving; and therefore they will hang down their Heads like a Bull-rush, not for a day or two, that is somewhat too long, but for an hour it may be, or less, confessing their Sins to God, and demeaning themselves for the time with an artificial forced demureness: But all this, if this be all, is not worth a Bull-rush. Here is no abdication, no forsaking:

king : When the Ordinance and a little space of time is over, they lick up their Vomit, and are too often (as drunken Men having vomited) but made more fresh to fall to their Cups again. They deal with their Sins, as *Abraham* said to his Servants, *Abide you here — and I — will go yonder and worship, and come to you again*, Gen. 22. 5. This is like what is reported of the Serpent, going to drink at the Fountain, she casts out her Poison : but so soon as she hath drunk, she takes it again. True Repentance puts the Soul in the posture of the *Israelites* eating the Passeeover, they had their Shoes on their Feet, and Staff in their Hand : a readiness and resolution presently to depart from *Egypt*, never to return more. True Repentance gives Sin, not a temporary Ejection, but an eternal Divorce : and though it may sue and clamour afterwards by its Temptations, and sometimes get ground, it never obtains its former Marriage or Espousals.

Leaven, which signified the sowre and corrupt Humours of Heart and Life, was before the eating of the Passeeover to pass a strict search : Candles were to be lighted, that no Hole or Corner in the House might secure it from detection and ejection. Our Hearts have many blind Holes, for the hiding

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ing of Sin : but true Repentance, and such as is meet for this Preparation, is no ways partial, hath no kindness for its Deceits. *Purge out therefore the Old Leaven. Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with Old Leaven, &c. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8.* If the Leaven be not purged out, no Lamb must be eaten in the Passeeover : If no Repentance answerable to that Figure, no Christ to be had in the Supper. It is sad to consider the ignorant boldness, or bold ignorance of many Habitual Swearers, Drunkards, and unclean Persons, who dare intrude themselves into this Communion, not being purged so much as from those filthinesses, much less from the love and reign of all Sin whatever ; and yet can, like the Harlot, *Prov. 30. 20. Eat, and wipe her Mouth, and say, I have done no wickedness.* Let such seriously consider these following Particulars.

First, *He that comes without the Preparation of Repentance, must go away without the Blessing or Comfort of the Ordinance.* There is abundance of Joy and Comfort to be had in this Feast by prepared Hearts. What are Civil Feasts without Joy ? and what is the Joy of Civil to Spiritual Feasts ? *A Feast is made for Laughter, and Wine makes merry, Eccles. 10. 19.* It is often such a Laughter at civil Feasts, as is uncivil and madness ; and such

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such a mirth as is the Song of Fools, breaking out as they break out of their Wits; but the Laughter and Mirth of the Soul in this Ordinance, is Holy, Serious, Rational, Spiritual, Sublime, and Substantial, promoted by sobriety and serious impressions. But all this he is a Stranger to, who comes without Repentance, he intermeddles not with this joy. This Feast, is *a Feast of fat and sweet things, a Feast of Wine, a Feast of fat things full of Marrow*: But if the Veil of the hardness of Heart be not taken away, there is no beholding the Glory, nor tasting the sweetness of this Table; it will be but a lean Feast to them. The Heart thinned and emptied by Repentance, is the only Heart that shall be made fat here. *The Poor shall eat and be satisfied*, Psal. 22. 26. It is the Humbled, Penitent, returning Prodigal, that will meet with the fatted Calf prepared, the Gold-Ring, the welcoming Tears of Joy, and Kisses of Love from a reconciled Father. He that is still a Prodigal, may take his Meal with the Swine, and extract what Joys are to be had out of the Trough-swill and Husks; but such foul and lean food will make no heart merry but those of Swine.

And this is no wonder, that Impenitents find no better entertainment, for God

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invites them not ; they come without bidding, & therefore are like to have no better Chear or Welcome than they bring with them. *A Stranger, a Foreigner shall not eat thereof*, Exod. 12. Nor yet *a hired Servant, nor any uncircumcised Person*. Now all the Wicked and Impenitent *are estranged from the Womb*, Psalm. 54. 3. Servants of Sin uncircumcised, therefore no Guests of God's bidding. *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised of Heart*, Acts 7. 51. Every hard, unbroken, unmelted Person, is with God an uncircumcised prophane Person, with whom he will have nothing to do in his holy and peculiar Ordinances.

Secondly, *An Impenitent meets with a worse thing than no Blessing, even a Breach and a Blow* ; and that in a double respect.

First, Such shall not only be no what the better, but by far the worse for his receiving in his Sins, more the Child of the Devil than before.

And, secondly, they become thereby more hardned in Sin, the Snares of the Devil have faster hold of them. Every Ordinance a Man passes through in an impenitent frame, contracts not only a farther Guilt, but also a farther hardness on his Soul. And this is not only a hardness, which is the natural effect of a customary impenitence,

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tence under Soul-melting Ordinances, but also a hardness of heart that is judicial. God is provoked thereby to give up Men to the Lusts they so adhere to, in contempt of his Holy Ordinances and Administrations. And this of the Lord's Supper, so despised and abused, doth above all others provoke God to such an expression of his Displeasure and Indignation. As they invert the order and due frame of their hearts, so God inverts his Seal and Impress from a farther sealing of Assurance on the Soul to the Day of Redemption, to a farther sealing it to the Day of Destruction.

The Effects of this Ordinance are herein like the Waters of Jealousy, *Numb.* 5. 27, 28. Such as the Woman was for Chastity or Defilement, such was its Operation: If Chaste, she became thereby the more healthful and fruitful; but if Polluted, her Belly should swell, her Thigh rot, and she should be accursed. That saying, *Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis*, is true in this case: Though the Ordinance be the same in it self, it works according to the nature of the Receiver. The same Sun, yea the same Beams of Heat, softens Wax, and hardens Clay, makes Flowers fragrant, and Dung-hills stink. *Seneca* hath a notable saying, very applicable to my present

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purpose. *No bad Man can benefit, because whatever good he possesses, 'tis corrupted by his ill use : even as a vitious Stomach turns the Food that should nourish, into Diseases and matter of grief.* Sen. de-benef. Lib. 5. Cap. 12. 'Tis sad to have that which is ordained to Life, to become a means of Death : Our greatest Blessings, to prove our greatest Bane : and that which is intended to promote Sanctity, and the sweetest Consolations, to prove rottenness to the Bones, yea to the Soul ; and render a Man's Heart and State more wofully wretched : yet this is the case of an Impenitent Receiver, of one who dare presume to this Sacred Ordinance in such a state. *The Soul that eats of the Flesh of the Peace-Offerings, that pertain to the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that Soul shall be cut off from his People. Moreover, the Soul that shall touch any unclean thing, &c.* Levit. 7. 20, 21. What should then become of those who wallow in all manner of the grossest Impieties, and yet adventure to eat of this Peace-Offering ? Surely though it be not the unpardonable, 'tis yet a very high provoking Sin, such as much endangers the Guilty to fall under the secret Sentence of Eternal Hardness ; such as is in effect, an everlasting Excommunication, or cutting off

off from the favour of God, and that Faith and Repentance which are necessary to its obtaining.

He that would receive Life (saith Aug. Serm. de Temp.) let him change his Life, for if he changeth not his Life, he lives but in Judgment: his Life doth him more harm than good, it kills rather than quickens him. If Men will be eating of this Feast, and will not be estranged from their Lusts; 'tis like to fare no better with them, than with the Israelites, Psalm. 78. 30, 31. *Whilst the Meat was yet in their Mouths, the Wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.* And although thou seekest no wrath for the present, yet it may be inflicted insensibly on thy Soul. A Man that brings every day a Faggot to a Stack, may make a great Pile though insensibly; 'tis so with such as are frequent in these Provocations: and the greater the Heap, the greater the Flame, when God shall put Fire to it; either by present Terrors, to awaken thee to Life: or future Condemnation, whereby Death shall eternally live. The Reasons of this are specially two.

First, *Every Impenitent Sinner defiles the Lord's Table.* An Impenitent Sinner is so filthy a Person, that he defiles all he touches. In the Ceremonial Uncleanness, which is

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but expressive of moral pollution; he that was defiled, defiled every Bed he lay on, every Seat he sat on, and the very Saddle he rode on; such an one is infectious. *As Holy Things do not sanctify Dogs, nor Pearls nourish Swine: on the contrary, Dogs pollute Holy Things, and Swine destroy Pearls: and wicked Men have the same effect.* Chrysost. Hom. 11. Oper. Imper. *He that defiles the Temple of the Lord, him shall God destroy.* 1Cor. 3. 17. Put Table instead of Temple, and 'tis as true. Their Sin was great, who said, *The Table of Lord is polluted,* Mat. 2. 12. What is their Sin then who pollute it? It is a horrible thing for a Man's own Table to be polluted. *All Tables are full of vomit and filthiness,* Isa. 28. 8. How much more to have the Lord's Table thus defiled? But this Pollution are all Men guilty of, whose Sins are not washed away by the Humblings, Sorrows, and Repentance of Faith, before they approach this Ordinance. *Incense from defiled hands is but a stink, and the presumption deserves wrath instead of favour.* Cypr. de Cæn. Dom. O that Men would seriously consider this! The report of *Ambrose's* rebuke to *Theodosius* the Emperor is famous. When *Theodosius*, after he had at *Theſſalonica* caused a Slaughter, for a Rebellion, of the Innocent

cent and the guilty together ; he comes to the Supper, as formerly, without a professed Repentance of that Inhumanity : but *Ambrose* the Bishop, not fearing the Emperor, so much as loving Faithfulness to Christ's Holy Ordinance, and the safety of his and the Emperor's Soul, thus rebuked him : *What, wilt thou reach forth these hands of thine, yet dropping with the Blood of unjust slaughter, and with them lay hold upon the most Holy Body of the Lord ? or wilt thou offer to put that precious Blood to thy Mouth ?* Upon this Reproof the Emperor desisted, till he had reconciled himself to the Lord, and to his Church. Is it not enough for you, who live under the power of gross Sins, or any other, to defile your own Souls ? Will you double your Guilt by defiling these Sacred Mysteries also ? The thoughts of this should make such Sinners fear and tremble.

Secondly, *A Man bringing the guilt of his Sins along with him to this Table* (which every impenitent Receiver doth) *he puts God in mind to do justice on him.* It was a Prayer for a great Good, *Psal. 20. 3. The Lord remember all thine Offerings, and accept thy burnt Sacrifice.* It is not a less evil for God to be put in mind of our Sins, and Rebellions. Impenitence will cause that

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sin to reach and abide on thine own Soul, which from a holy Penitent is transferred to the Sacrifice. An Impenitent comes to the Lord's Table with that Knife in his Hand, yea hug'd in his Bosom, that stuck the Son of God at the very Heart. And will the sight of this be an Advocate for thy good? *They sacrifice Flesh for the Sacrifices of mine Offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not,* Hol. 8. 13. The next words give the Reason; *Now will he remember their iniquity.* No marvel he accepts not their Offerings, when he remembers their Iniquity: and this remembrance doth also imply his being revenged on them by a positive Punishment, as well as the privation of the Blessing.

When the Lord beholds a Man come in his wickedness to his Table, he doth as it were thus speak concerning him; behold, here is the Man that was drunk, swore prophane, was unclean, defrauded, was unmerciful to my Poor; that is a proud Person, a covetous Worldling, a hater of the Godly, a common neglecter of Holy Duties, a careless Sinner: the Man who thinks to mock me and mine Appointments by a dissembled Worship and acknowledgment, and to cover all his Be-
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loved Lusts, and secure himself from my displeasure, by presuming into my Presence, and laying violent hands on my Childrens Bread. How can I forbear him ! Ah ! I will be avenged on this Enemy ! I will ease my self of this Adversary ! I will make him know that such Provocations shall be to the confusion of his own Face. If the Lord should thunder out such things as these in thine Ears, would it not awaken thy sleepy secure Soul ? would it not strike thee dead with amazement ? O therefore hear *Moses*, hear God by his Ministers. Provoke not him to speak in the Power of his Terror, lest you die. Put not this New Wine into Old Vessels. Mourn for Sin before you come to this Feast, that it may be a Feast to you indeed, never to be turned into Mourning.

C H A P. VII.

*Of the Necessity of Charity and Love in
an Orderly Communicant.*

NOW follows the fourth thing required in Habitual Preparation, viz. *Charity*, and *Love* to our Brethren. This is a Truth confessed on all hands; yea, many who make no great Conscience of Knowledge, Faith, or Repentance, will be concerned to end all Controversies with their Brethren, that they may come to this Table in Charity. But they who abide in other notorious sins, may without breach of Charity be judged unworthy, for all their Charity.

This Grace of Love and Charity is required in performances of Worship. *I will that Men pray every-where, lifting up Holy Hands without wrath or doubting,* 1 Tim. 2. 8. As doubting shuts out our Prayers for want of Faith; so Wrath for want of Love. In hearing the Word profitably, all malice must be laid aside, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Services not seasoned with Love, are very unfavoury to God. *Have Salt in your selves,*
and

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and be at Peace one with another, Mark 9. 50. This is the Salt of Services which must not be wanting: *Thou shalt not suffer the Salt of the Covenant of thy God to be lacking, &c. With all thine Offerings thou shalt offer Salt. Levit. 2. 13.* Without Love we are unfit to hear or pray, but most unfit for the Lord's Table; which is the Symbol and Profession of Union and Communion with God, and all his Saints in Heaven and Earth.

That is a known place, *Matth. 5. 23, 24.* *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remember that thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* It may seem to be somewhat an odd and incongruous carriage, and to have some shew of irreverence, for a Man upon any secret and unknown occasion to others, all on a sudden to turn his back upon the Altar, and go his ways: Yet however abrupt and irreverent it may seem to others, Jesus Christ will rather have Men admit of all that, than an uncharitable Communion, and any unacceptable Worship. *Certainly (saith Bernard) my Gift (whatever it be) shall not be accepted, unless (if I remember that my Brother hath perhaps wronged me)*

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me) I reconcile him to me : how much less if I shall not first be reconciled my Self ? Bern. de Præcept. & Dispens. This being a Preparative Duty, must be done ; and being necessary to the Acceptance and Benefit of the Duty, it were better the Duty were left undone, than that ; though the omission of either is bad enough.

Secondly, It will appear by the Contents of 1 Cor. 12. 13. *By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body ; and have bin all made to drink into one Spirit.* The Apostle had shewed before, vers. 8, 9, 10. that though some Men do receive personal and peculiar Gifts, yet they are given by the Spirit, for the Service of the whole Church : the Reason is in short, because the whole Church is but one Body, yea one Soul, or one Spirit ; expressing thereby the unexpressible intimacy, nearness, union of every Member to each other : and therefore there should be a suitable endearedness ; a Love like what was the frame of the Church when the Gospel was first preached with the astonishing Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts 4. 32. *And the multitude that believed were of one Soul.* They who believed the same Gospel-Truths, were not only united intellectually, or at agreement in their Opinions, but were also by Mutual Love so
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incorporated (but that is too low) or rather so inanimated together, as if one Soul and no more had informed them all, directing their Understandings, Actions, and Sensations. And indeed both the Sacraments, according to this Text, do aim at this holy and lovely Union of Love : Here are all the *three Witnesses on Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood*, testifying and pleading for this Communicative Love and Charity, from the most effectual ground of the most intimate Union. The Water of Baptism, the Blood of the Sacrament, and the Spirit making use of both, to that end of the Union of Love.

But what meetness for the very Design of this Ordinance, where Spirits are so im-bitter'd against each other, that they not only are not one, but as far from Unity as Inimical Contrariety? It will be a Fray, rather than a Feast, where the Guests (though not of Kindred) hate and smite each other ; but much more monstrous to love them (like Men in the Falling-Sickness, devided of the use of Reason, and acted violently by their Disease) beating and tearing the parts of their own Body, by its own Members. This, though a terrible Resemblance, falls short of painting to the Life the Viciousness and Dis temper
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of uncharitableness among Christian Brethren. The Love-Feasts of the Primitive Churches, were to this end of promoting Love suitable to their Name. We have left off their Feasts, as without ground; and O that we had not cashier'd their Love also! *I hear that when you are come together, there are Divisions among you,* was the Charge of St. Paul against the *Corinthians*; and a black one it was, that they should come together (I suppose to this Ordinance, as well as for others: for they seldom shut it out of their solemn publick Worship) and leave their Love behind them. It was a common saying of the Heathens concerning the Primitive Christians, *See how they love one another!* But if they were to put their Remark upon Professed Christians of our dayes, it would be just contrary: *See how they hate one another!* Love is the Cement of Communion; Union without it is but a Prison, or as Prisoners in their unwilling Chains. Where Love is the Bond, 'tis no Bondage; 'tis a spontaneous Servitude, full of freeness, sweetness, and firmness: from which a Holy Soul would think it some diminution of its felicity, to be at liberty to part.

Thirdly, As the Sacrament of Baptism is the Sacrament of our new Birth, so this
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is not only for the renewing that *Covenant*, but in order to our nutrition and growth in the Contents of the *Covenant*, (*i. e.*) in every Grace, and the exercise of it. Therefore to this Ordinance, we should come with Designs and Expectations of a growth in that new Life: but without Love to Brethren this cannot be attained. The dislocation of any joint or part from the rest of the Body, will necessarily forbid any benefit to it; or at least so much as may promote its thriving welfare. The Apostle renders the encreasing of the Church *with the increase of God*, Col. 2. 19. to have its rise from its knitting, and uniting of each Member in the whole, so as may be of common use. Now what are these Joints and Bands? surely somewhat more than external Polity and Order; even union of Soul which we have already spoken of; without which the Church is but a lifeless Form.

In the Church, the Body of Christ, there is, First, Many and sundry Members. Secondly, They are all joined and compacted together. Thirdly, Their conjunction is after the same manner, *by one Spirit, into one Spirit*; so as that the Spirits of Believers do, as it were, insinuate themselves into each other. Fourthly, The firmness and abiding of
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this is by the Bonds of Love and Peace. Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, Ephes. 4.3. And Col. 3.14. Love is called the Bond of Perfectness. The Increase to this Perfectness, is by the exercise of Love Mutually and Universally. Ephes.4.16.— *Maketh increase of the Body, unto the edifying of it self in Love.*

Fourthly, Where want of Love is, it crosseth that pleasure and contentment which is suitable to, and one end of this Spiritual Feast. When Men sit down at one Table with divided Hearts, it cuts off much of the good Chear; it takes away much of the relish of the best prepared Viands, that the Feast can be furnished withal. *Better is a Dinner of green Herbs where Love is, than a stalled Ox with hatred,* Prov.15.17. 'Tis a woful contradiction to this Holy Feast, for Christians, instead of eating with one accord, and drinking into one Spirit of Love and endearedness, to be devouring one another; for rending Wrath, and consuming Malice, to be preying; where Love should be feeding delightfully on each others Divine Relation, and Spiritual Beauty. O that what should be barred from our common Boards, might find no entrance or welcome to this Sacred Festival. *St. Austin* would not endure

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dure Haters and Detractors at his Table, and therefore had ingraven on it as a Monitor in that case these Verses, *Possid. de vita.* Aug. Chap. 22.

*Quisquis amat dictis absentium rodere
famam,
Hanc Mensam indignam noverit esse
sibi.*

Who loves to gnaw the Fame of
Absents here,
Him I account unworthy of my
Chear.

And indeed though want of Charity among those who sit down together at the same Numerical Ordinance, hath some special aggravations of Guilt and Displeasure: yet to be void of it with respect to any Christian however remote, is far from Innocent, and a disturber of its delights. For this Communion is no such narrow thing, as to be restrained to the Members visibly present; but hath a latitude which takes in Christ the Head, and all his Members, whether in Heaven triumphing, or travelling and fighting their way thither, through any part of the Wilderness of this lower World: Not only in Conversion, with respect of Relation, but in this Ordinance

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nance, in the actual and ravishing improvement of that Relation; *We are come unto the Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, — to the general Assembly of the Church of the First Born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus, &c. Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24.* These raised and sublime Considerations, the Apostle applies as an Antidote against want of Love, and that unpeaceableness and bitterness that follows upon it. *Follow Peace, verse 14. looking diligently, lest — any Root of bitterness springing up trouble you, vers. 15.* Uncharitableness is bitter, yea, a Root of bitterness; that puts sowre Leaven into the Bread, and bitter Gall and Wormwood into the Wine of this Feast.

To come to the Sacrament under the power of this Distemper, doth no less null and make void these Ends of the Ordinance to us, than those more visible rudenesses of which the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 11. 21. This is not to eat the Lord's Supper.* Such a deportment is not like that of little Children, after whose similitude we must enter into the Kingdom of God, *Luke 18. 17.* And the special quality of little Children, that qualifies for this, is a being void

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of malice. *Howbeit in malice be ye Children,* 1 Cor. 14. 20. that is, be without malice. I know not why the *Papists* should engross Charity to themselves; or that because they seem to make it so much their peculiar, we should disdain its obligation: as if they had defiled that to us, on which God hath written the highest Character of Holiness.

Fifthly, *This Ordinance is a shewing forth the Lord's Death.* 1 Cor. 11. 26. *Ye do shew forth the Lord's Death.* Although one sense of shewing forth the Lord's Death by this Ordinance, be the Profession of a Crucified Jesus, acknowledged by us as the Foundation of our Hopes of Eternal Life, and that he is our Lord and Master; yet it also holds forth, and professes our Resolution to live in conformity to his Death. This was the Apostle's Prayer, *Phil. 3. 10. That I might be made conformable to his Death.* What was expressed in the Death of Christ by higher terms than his Love? His Love to those whom he purchased to be his Brethren, and was pleased to own them under that Appellation, when they laid far greater temptations on him to disclaim and hate them, than ever any of us received from the most provoking or despicable of our Fellow-Members?

Whilst

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Whilst the Lord Jesus conversed with his Disciples, before his Death; as their Pastor and Master also: What Unbelief, Pride, Contention, Frowardness, and Ignorance did he detect them of? And although he let them not escape without a chiding, it never entred into his Heart to withdraw his Love or Communion from them. He callsthem, and carries it towards them as his Brethren; and under that consideration terribly menaces any that should offend the least of them, *Mat. 25. 40.* And when they all forsook him, and at such a time when it most became them to be in a flame of Love & Gratitude; even when his Soul was groaning, and his Blood reaking hot that was shedding for their sakes: He (considering their temptation, and weakness with compassion) is so far from rejecting and excommunicating them out of his Love, that he doth not so much as cast their Faults in their Teeth, when risen from the Dead: but uses in his first message to them, the kind and charitable compellation of Brethren: *Go, tell my Brethren, that I go before them into Galilee, Matth. 28. 10.*

Peter was of all the rest, deepest in his declining and provoking his Lord; by not only departing from, but denying that ever he knew him: and that they might be

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be convinced he was no Disciple of the Holy Jesus, polluted his Mouth with Cursing and Swearing, the black Mark of the vilest of Men. Yet Christ who knew his sincerity, rebuked him only with this heart-melting breaking Question; *Simon Peter, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* As if he should say, thou didst before the Tryal, shew thy self forwarder than thy Fellows to stand by me, and madest thy boast as if thy Faith and Love were of better Mettal than any of theirs; and though they should all play the Cowards, thou wouldst abide the heat of the Battel, and be as a Standard-bearer among ten thousand. But now the proof is made, hast thou the same high Opinion of thy self above thy Brethren? This was the Love, Charity, and Communion, Christ our Head and Lord had, and hath for us his Brethren; especially when taking that Cup of Bitterness, Poison and Hell for our sakes. He then knew, as well as now, how unhandfomly and disobligingly we would carry it towards him; what Affronts, and how many we should put upon him; yet he proceeds to love, and die for us. And before-hand, to expresse his charitable Communion, he not only sits down with his Disciples (then walking with him) at this blessed

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blest Feast of Love, but he also transfers it to all the succeeding Generations of Believers : and with the same advantage of his Personal (though invisible) Presence and Communion with us.

From the Death of Christ, out of his pure Love to us, the Apostle *John* (who knew what it was to love, as well as most of the Sons of Men) infers, that we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren, 1 *John* 3. 17. Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us; and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.

And from hence, by an Argument *à majori*, concludes all Duties and Kindnesses of a lower Class. Surely 'tis not so much to forgive, as to die; to love, as to cease to live for their sakes. Our Lord Jesus, whose Death we ought (so far as capable and called) to imitate, he died that he might love, that all bars in the way of Reconciliation might be removed : whereas our Charity calls for no such Cost, only the trouble of getting our Hearts into that posture. Christ was God, and is so; yet forgives and holds Communion. O what dead Dogs are we, that we should take it to be a diminution of our Honour, not to be revenged; or to
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pass by Offences from our Equals (it may be our Betters) as tolerable things!

All these things considered, and many more, which a Soul touched with Divine Love may easily help it self with, should shame us out of an uncharitable temper towards our Fellow-Christians, and cloath us with a Holy Zeal, to banish for ever that dishonour to the fellowship of the Saints, and greatest disturber of the Peace, out of the Temple, the Christian Church.

C H A P. VIII.

Of Obedience in an Orderly Communicant.

Habitual Preparation, takes in Habitual and Actual Obedience also. A Child in his rebellious and stubborn fits, is no meet Guest at this Table. He that will come in due order, must be such a one who in some good (at least sincere) measure, *orders his Conversation aright*. 'Tis impossible for him to be an orderly Communicant, who is a disorderly Person; and regards not the Laws of the Lord of the Fami-

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Families of Heaven and Earth, and Master of this Feast. For a Rebel Enemy, yea, for a disobedient Child, God hath prepared his Fetters, not his Feast. He cares not to nourish foolish and hurtful Lusts, with the Dainties and Delights designed to put strength and courage into his Peoples Graces. A Man in his disobedience approaching this Ordinance, puts a high affront upon God; an affront of no better a countenance, than for a Rebel or Delinquent to rush into his Prince's Presence; presume to set himself down at his Table, when the Prince is feasting with his Faithful Subjects, and Dearest Friends; and that with his Weapons of Rebellion naked in his right-hand, and without the least submission or atonement for Reconciliation. A disobedient Soul is every way unworthy of the Lord. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,* Col. 1. 10. Neither God can, nor his Saints ought to have fellowship with disobedient Persons. *And if any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that Man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed,* 2 Thess. 3. 14.

Obedience is that which God regards above Sacrifices; without which a Dog's Head, or Swines Blood is acceptable as the
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most costly and formal Solemnities. Isa. 66.3. *He that turns his ear away from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an Abomination*, Prov. 28.9. This Service with such a frame will meet with no better welcome. *Saul* sacrificed, but was rejected for want of Obedience. 1 Sam. 15. 12. *Behold, to obey, is better than Sacrifice*. And it is so upon these five Grounds :

1. Obedience is more Spiritual.
2. More Universal ; a part to be performed with the whole Man, at all times.
3. Wicked Men might, and did offer Sacrifices ; but Obedience is peculiar to the Saints.
4. Sacrifice was null and void as to profit without Obedience : but where there is Obedience, and in some cases no Sacrifice, Obedience will not lose its Acceptation and Reward.
5. Obedience qualified and fitted a Man for Sacrifice, but Sacrifice doth not qualify and fit a Man for Obedience, where there was not before a Principle to that purpose. The same things may be said in the disparity of Sacraments to Obedience.

The necessity of Obedience as Preparative to this Ordinance, may farther appear by these three things ;

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First,

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First, Christ will own no disobedient Person as his Friend. The friendship of the Master of the Feast is the best Dish at the Table. 'Tis storied of a Favorite to a Prince, that he loved the Prince's Countenance better than his Coin. And of *Alexander's* Bounty expressed to one with a Cup of Gold, to another with a Kiss; that he who received the Cup of Gold, said, complainingly, Sir, the Kiss you gave your Friend, was better Gold than my Cup. Christ's friendly Countenance will welcome only those whom he invites, and they are his Friends. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you, Joh. 15. 14.* To such it is that Christ will be so exceeding friendly, as to stir up their Appetites, and encourage their Liberty; with, *Eat, O Friends, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved. Cant. 5. 1.*

Secondly, None but Obedient Persons shall have Communion with Christ. With such Christ will sup, and they shall sup with him, *Rev. 3. 20.* But Christ will, by denying this Communion to Disobedient Persons, send them away supperless from this Supper. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be beloved of my Father; and I will love him, and*

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I will manifest my self to him, Mat. 14. 21.
'Tis to such, and only such, that Chiist will open his Heart, and give them a view of that rich and Soul-bleſſing Love that lives there. And indeed without this Communion and manifeſtation of Chriſt's Love, the Bread will be unfavoury, and the Wine without Spirit and Life. *Let him kiſſ me with the kiſſes of his Mouth, for his Love is better than Wine,* (Cant. 1. 2.) was a holy and wiſe choice of the Spouſe, in her Spiritual Extaſies and Raptures. The Wine that comes from a Friend's Lips, or in the Cup which he hath kiſſed as a Token of Love, adds not a little to its reliſh. Chriſt's manifeſtation of his Love to the Soul, is the chief expectation of a well-ſtudied Communicant: But this is not to be expected, where we kiſſ not the Son with the kiſſ of a real Homage, Service and Obedience; from whence the Truth of that ſaying of *Auſtin* roundly follows, *What is there more wild and unreaſonable, than to hold Communion in the Sacraments of the Lord; and to have no Communion with his Commands?* de Bapt. Cont. Donat.

Thirdly, Where there is no Obedience, it utterly denies any Grace to be there. A diſobedient Perſon, brings to the Lord's Table neither Faith nor Repentance, nor

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Love, nor Humility, nor any other Vertue. What a naked thing, and unlovely is such an one ? How unarmed to resist Temptations, wherewith Satan is most busie when the Soul is running for the greatest Prize ? How unfurnished for the Work of that best of Hours on this side Heaven ? What poor Earnings is Christ, or such a miserable Wretch like to make of this entercourse ? Obedience is *Fruit meet for Repentance* ; that is, such as will evidence Repentance to be sincere and true. Where Obedience is not, there can be no Faith. It was somewhat a Sarcastical Challenge of St. James, *Shew me thy Faith without thy Works*. As if he should have said, Let me see you do that which is impossible. The like is true of Love. Faith worketh by Love, even as the Members and parts of the Body do their Offices Active, by that heat natural and vital which is from the Heart imparted to them. As where there is no Love, no Work is done worth the name of Good or Gracious ; so where no Work is done, no true sincere Obedience, there can be no Love. Love hath its Seat and Throne in the Heart ; what possesses that, moves all the other Faculties of Soul and Body suitably to its inclination. As the Helm of a Ship which way soever
that

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that is turned, the strength of Sails filled with violent Winds, and Oars managed with the strongest Arms, will move the Vessel but according to its Influence and Direction. These things considered, it is beyond doubt, that an obedient Heart and Life is as necessary a Preparation for this Holy Communion, as are the Duties and Blessings of it.

C H A P. IX.

Of solemn Sequestering, and setting a Man's self apart before receiving the Sacrament.

HAVING already spoken of *Habitual Preparation*, we shall now treat of that which is *Actual*: for although a Man have all the parts of Habitual Preparation before-named, he must not there take up his rest. Actual Preparation is requisite to a good and profitable Communicant, though Habitual may denominate a good Christian. The five wise Virgins, *Mat. 25. 4.* took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps, and had their Lamps burning; but they also trim'd their Lamps, when they went forth to meet the Bridegroom, that they might address

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themselves with the greatest circumspection and solemnity, and their Lamps might burn with a more than ordinary brightness and clearness. A Musician that hath skill to play on his Instrument, will yet tune it, and rub his Fingers (if nummed with chill) e're he uses it, that he may do his part with more accuracy and agility. And indeed however a Person may be habitually prepared, if those Graces are not stirred up and quickned to their proper and occasional Exercise, he will make but dull and uncomfortable Work, and as poor Earnings.

Actual Preparation consists in these five things: of which we shall speak in their order. 1. *In Examination.* 2. *In renewing and quickning of Grace.* 3. *In stirring up in our selves strong desires after Christ.* 4. *In expectation of the Benefits of the Sacrament.* 5. *In seeking God by Prayer in a special manner.*

First, Of solemn Sequestration, which is an avocation from all common employments, to a serious solitude; that nothing may intermeddle with so much as our Thoughts, but what may have a tendency to put our Souls into a due posture, for the exercise and improvement of the Ordinance. All other things must for a time become *alien to us*, and must be dealt with

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as *Abraham* with his Servants, when he went to sacrifice *Isaac* at Mount *Moriah*, Gen. 22. 4, 5. *When he saw the Place afar off, he said unto them, Abide you here with the Ass, and I and the Lad will go yonder and worship, and then return to you again.* Thus we should set aside all secular Business and Cogitations, and not suffer them to go with us unto this *Mount Moriah*; *no, nor so much as into our Closets. Pretences of Consequences, and clamorous Importunities should meet with a deaf-ear, and a bolted Heart; and however often repeated, should have no other Answer than *Nehemiah* gave to those ensnaring and plotting Companions, *Nehem. 6. 4. I am doing a great Work, and I cannot come down to you, Wherefore should the Work cease?* Christ admonishes his Disciples, *Mat. 6. 6.* to shut the Door to them, when they addressed to private Prayer. This was to difference them from Hypocrites, who lost all their ends of their Religion without Spectators. But there is another convenience of such a Retirement, *scil.* to bar our Addresses about earthly Affairs: yet if the Heart keep open House to impertinent and distracting Thoughts, the most secret Closet will no more secure us from their Intrusions, than

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if our Persons were on the Exchange, or the open High-way.

We find among other things which made a Man unfit to eat the Pasſeover, *being in a Journey afar off* was one, *Numb. 9. 13.* But why was ſuch a Man unfit? except from the great difficulty of keeping out the Thoughts of his buſineſs, which being of ſo great a moment as to call him far from his Habitation and Relations, would in all probability call off his Thoughts from that ſolemn Ordinance alſo: or at leaſt ſo diſtract him in its performance, as would make gaeat abatements in its acceptance with God, and benefit to himſelf.

It is no eaſy Matter for us to ſhake off our earthly Concerns, they are ſuch familiars, and ſo nigh of kin to our earthly Hearts. 'Tis a harder Work than to ſtrip our ſelves of our Work-day Apparel, and put on Holy-day Attire. Were not Senſe, Cuſtom, and Corruption, become Tyrants, and hard Task-maſters to us; we might paſs from digging in the Garden to ſolemn communion with God, and from any Civil, to the higheſt Spiritual and Religious Employments, as eaſily as we can paſs our Bodies out of one Room into another; but as the caſe ſtands 'tis far otherwiſe. The

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Buyers and Sellers that throng the Temple of our Souls, must be chid, whipt, and bolted out; or this Temple will not be left void of these Intruders: no, not against this time of Worship, of all others the most serious. He that can do this without time spent to the best advantage beforehand, is in a much better condition, and hath the Things and Thoughts of the *World* more at command, than the most of his Brethren.

When this is done, another task of Time is yet to do; our Hearts are not only to be swept, but they must be also garnished. Grace is not like the Weeds of Nature, that will hardly be kept under, but if left to their own liberty, will grow and spring amain: Grace must be awakened and quickned by spiritual good Husbandry; and Prayer must call to Heaven for Waterings, for Gales; *Awake, O North Wind, come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth, Cant. 4. 16.* But 'tis a pittiful thing, when instead of these Fragrances in Meditations and Discourses, Men's Hearts and Tongues shall be filled with Market-chat, even to the Church-Doors. O this is rank unfavoury, for Men to come to the Lord's Table, reeking hot off the World! To cool to these lower

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things, and excite a Heavenly Heat, will ask time improved in the most devoted Retirement.

Another ground for this Retirement and Sequestration in order to a prepared frame is, That all the Powers of our Souls are to be called in, and united for this great Work; *That we may attend upon the Lord without distraction*, 1 Cor. 7. 35. And this is to be understood, not only of a freedom from Molestation, but also that entireness of Soul, by which the full and whole stream of Faculties and Affections may serve to this holy Imployment. God loves a broken Heart, but he hates a divided Heart in Religious Duties; especially in this, wherein we come to tender to God our Stipulation of the Covenant, all of which is but a Heart to be his; we had need then have it as large a Heart, as all our Strength and Treasures can make it. *My Soul, praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me bless his Holy Name*, was David's, and should be our practice, Psalm. 103. 1. And when he had gotten the several Powers of his Soul fixed to this end, he then resolves to begin the Work. Psalm. 57. 7, 8. *My Heart, is fixed; O God, I will sing, and give praise; awake up my Glory, awake Psalt'ry and Harp, &c.* The Sacrament is an Eucharistical

cal thing; a Feast, a Song of Loves: wherein the Soul is to strain its utmost in blessing God, and the Redeemer, for that Cup and Bread of Blessing. To tole in the whole Congregation of our Faculties and Affections, to do their parts in this Work, we must be a little before-hand, with the time of its performance.

I would not be imposing of certain spaces of time, for every one to take up in withdrawings for Preparation: for that would be to prescribe the same Rule for different Constitutions of Souls, and Conditions of Life: some may not (as the very Poor, whose Families would feel the want of an hours labour in their Bellies) others need not (as such whose Employments and (to be hoped) Hearts also are ordinarily upon Spiritual and Divine Things) spend so much time as others; whose Business about the World may be enough alienating their Hearts from Soul-Concerns, and yet may afford time enough to call them home against such a Festival, and to set the Heart in a more than ordinary order. Much might be said also of Constitutions of Body. That which is but necessary time to compose some, would be more than-enough to confound others. And also according to degrees of
Grace

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Grace Habitual, time is required. Some there are whose Souls are maintained in such a constant *decorum* ; that as Persons that use always to go neat, are ready at a call to appear to any company ; so they are ready to any Duty, and can say (through the Grace of God) that their Hearts are seldom in a worse than a fixed frame. A little time will serve such, when Babes in Grace, and more careless Walkers will have more to do. But of all others they have cause of long Sequestrings and Retirements, whose falls into gross and scandalous Sins have not only exceedingly polluted their Garments, but also broken their very Bones ; such are not soon gotten into order, no not so far as a well-setled Disposition to receive the Lord Christ, and actually with the whole Heart to embrace the Covenant. Gross Sins are great Falls, whose Recovery is the Work almost of another Conversion. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren, Luke 22. 32.* Holy David found the Pollutions of the Sin of Uncleanness to cleave to his Disposition long after, and thereby the Order and Intireness of his Soul for God and Holiness, much disturbed and distracted ; which appears by that Prayer, *Psal. 51. Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit*

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Some rit *within me.* When formed Agues or Feavers are departed, and the strength of former Distempers quenched, yet they leave behind such grudgings and languishings, which Time as well as Means must wear off. Whiles these Relicks remain, the Body is very unfit for great Employments, or to enjoy the Delights within the reach of a healthful Constitution. 'Tis no otherwise with a Soul lapsed into dangerous and deeply defiling Sins; it will cost some more than ordinary time, in the most devoted holy Endeavours, to render it meet for an acceptable and comfortable Address to the Duties and Delights of a Sacramental Exercise. I conclude, that Retirement is necessary to all, the space of time every one may best chuse for himself; none being more capable of discerning the temper of a Man's own Soul than himself; at least if he be an Observer of his inward frame, which must needs be the practice of all upright Hearts, and with others this Chapter hath nothing to do.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

Of Examination.

THe Heart thus withdrawn, and bent to the Work of Preparation, its next part is Self-examination. *Let a Man examine himself*, 1 Cor. 11. 28. This though a Duty at other times, yet 'tis transcendently a Duty in order to so transcendent an Employment. And as the Duty is of great moment, and our slothful, proud, and self-opinionated Hearts very withdrawing from it; so it concerns us the more to espouse and be thorow in it. We must necessarily understand wherein lies our disorder, deadness, crookedness, defilement, before we can apply our selves to their due Remedies. If we find none or few Disorders, after an impartial search, the comfort of such a Result, will pay us for our pains and time with a better thing than Repentance.

This Ordinance being an Enclosure, and not a Common; an Adventure without a Right, is but a breaking the Lord's Hedg, and will render a Man a Trespasser; besides
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the Spoils such an one commits on this Sacred Palture, and his own Soul; for which God, who is owner of both, will require an Account. And indeed beside the standing Right every true Christian hath to this Ordinance, this Duty of Self-examination seems necessary to the using of that Right; as he who hath a right to the Food on his Table, hath yet (in a strict sence) no right to fall to, till a Blessing be craved, and Acknowledgment made to God as our Benefactor. And 'tis observable, that the Apostle exhorts, yea, binds conditionally those to examine themselves, who were already, as Saints, a formed particular Church; and he restrains not the Duty to the weaker or looser sort, but puts all upon it indifferently. The use and necessity of Self-examination, will appear more fully by the following Particulars.

First, *A Man's confidence that he is doing what is his Duty, depends on Self-Examination.* To have this Faith and Assurance, is not only necessary to make an Action good to us, which in it self is our Duty, but also discharges us of those Fears, Distractions, and Self-condemnings, which will otherwise greatly disturb and weaken us in the Duty. *Whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin,* Rom. 14. 23. The Apostle affirms
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as an indisputable Truth, *i. e.* for a Man to do this or that Action which he doubts of the lawfulness of, however lawful it be otherwise for him to do, yet his doubting makes it a sin to him. And upon this the Apostle grounds another Assertion, *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat.* Κατακ-
νευεται condemned, his Conscience will cen-
sure him as a Sinner therein. So that Self-
Examination being necessary to our being,
groundedly perswaded that our attending
on God in this Ordinance, is not our Sin,
but our Duty; carries a strong persuasive in
it to its serious use. And although it may
be said, That upon our Examination once,
and finding our fitness, we may be excused
repeating it again upon every occasion of
receiving: yet let it be first considered,
that there is requisite as well a present
fitness, as an inherent right: and second-
ly, That a renewed evidence of Grace, and
an often putting our Hearts into the best
posture, will be no small advantage and
comfort in our Christian course.

Secondly, *Our more comfortable and pro-
fitable Communion depends much upon the
actual knowledg of our fitness.* It is true,
that a hearty willingness to take what
Christ tenders in the Sacrament, is a real
fitness, *i. e.* to accept of a Crucified Lord
and

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and Saviour, and thereby to profess and bind our selves to the terms on which he is tendred. One receiving after this manner, doth it not without an inestimable advantage; though he understand not this to be saving Faith, nor dares to call it by that name; at least fears it would be too much presumption for him to conclude, that he is in Covenant with God.

But when a Man is satisfied, not only that he is willing to receive Christ upon his own terms, but also that he hath received him, is in Union to him, beholds the Inscription of Christ stamped on his Heart and Life, by which 'tis apparent that he belongs to Christ, and Christ to him: Who can tell the abundant entrance of such a Soul into the Pleasures, Treasures, and Glories of this Ordinance? Whereas that Life and Love written in the Wounds of a bleeding Jesus, is but one entire Epistle, or rather conveyance of Blessing to his Soul seen and read as in Capital Letters. While others take Christ with a trembling hand, fearing to be called *Dog* for so doing: such an one can boldly say, *My Lord, and my God. And we have known and believed the Love that God bath to us*, 1 John 4. 16. This is the effect of a Man's being fully and rightly perswaded in his own Mind of his own Interest:

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terest: and the means of this is Self-Examination. *Examine your selves* (saith the Apostle) *whether ye be in the Faith; prove your selves, &c.* 1 Cor. 13. 5. *πειράζετε, δοκιμάζετε*; try, pierce, and prove by Experiences. The Apostle seems to chide in the latter part of the Verse, such as had not some knowledg of Christ's being in them (though not so sharply as our Translation renders it) *Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be ἁδοκιμοί* (not reprobates in the common acceptation) but without proof or unapproved? The word being opposed to *δοκιμοί* by a privative particle: and it is just as if he had said, *Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except you have not examined your selves by a close search and trial, as the Gold-smith tries his Gold by the Touch-stone, or the Fire? and upon this trial found your selves approved.*

Thirdly, *It is much better to examine our selves before we come, than to be examined by God when we are there, or afterwards.* And God will examine them to purpose one time or other, who will not examine themselves; and it may be, as Paul was commanded to be examined, *viz. by scourging*, Acts 22. 24. Every interrogatory God puts to such a Soul, may be with a stripe as smarting as a Scorpion. It will
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be little comfort to a negligent Wretch to be accosted by the Master of the Feast, with a—*Friend, how cam'st thou in hither? What doest thou here?* Such words will fetch Blood, not only into the Cheeks by blushing for shame; but from the Heart by piercing Wounds made by the Sword of Christ's Mouth. *If we would judg our selves, we should not be judged,* 1 Cor. 11. 31. Certainly *David* would never have bin so bold, as to call on God in these words; Psalm. 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know mine heart, try me, &c.* if he had not first searched and tried himself. *Is it good that he should search you out?* Job 13. 9. But let every Man prove his own Work, so shall he have rejoycing in himself, Gal. 6. 4.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Examination of Faith.

THe things about which we are chiefly to examine our selves, are these three, viz. *The Truth, the Growth, and the want of Grace.* I shall begin with the Examination
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on of Faith. Counterfeit Gold may shew fair, and sometimes have more probable appearances of Truth at first view, than that which is true Gold ; especially when the false shall have all its advantages to plead its Truth, and the true be pale and sullied ; but the Touch-stone, or the Fire, will discover the Truth of the one, and the Cheat of the other.

Examine your selves (saith the Apostle) *whether ye be in the Faith?* Which is all one with examine your selves, whether the Faith be in you? The *Corinthians* were very busy in examining St. Paul and his Ministry: *But*, saith he, *seeing ye seek a proof of Christ in me*, do not neglect seeking a proof of Christ in your selves. 'Tis easy and common with the Hypocrite, to be searching and censuring others: but 'tis a good probability of sincerity, when Men are most concerned in the search of themselves. It is a high ground of suspicion that a Man's Coin is counterfeit, when he distasts the Trial, as a Man doth a Cause he knows or fears is stark naught. And although some things lose by trial, especially by a Fiery one, yet Faith is a gainer, not only of a good Report, but also of a substantial Increase. *The trial of your Faith, which is much more precious than*

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than Gold, may be found unto praise, &c. 1 Pet. 1. 7. Not only the Faith tryed, but its Trial also is precious; and Faith the more valued, by being Tryed-Faith.

And who can tell but this Faith may come to a fiery Trial? *Bilney* tried his Finger in the Candle, before he adventured his whole Body to the Fire. When the Fiery Trial comes, how many Mens Faith which hath seemed before more precious than Gold, hath proved more vile than Dross? He that dares not examine himself upon his Bed, will be hard put to it when he is brought to the Bar. And surely our Faith is but a low-priz'd thing with us, if of all other things we pretend to be owners of, that alone shall be thought unworthy of trial: as if it were no loss or disappointment for that to be found false, corrupt, and useles. These things I have premised, to urge the practical Observation of the Rules of the Examination of Faith. True Faith must be known by its Fruits and Effects. The Grapes, Pomegranates and Figs which the Spies brought out of the Land of *Canaan*, were evidence enough that it was a good Land. The Fruits by which Faith may be examined, are three. 1. *Such as respect God.* 2. *Our Selves.* 3. *Our Brethren.*

With

With respect to God, the Fruits of Faith are, 1. *Fruitfulness in all good Works, in obedience to God.* True Faith is no Loiterer. *Faith which works*, Gal. 5. 6. *Your Work of Faith*, 1 Theff. 1. 3. *The Work of Faith with Power*, 2 Theff. 1. 11. It makes a Man powerful to yield Obedience. Hence 'tis called the Obedience of Faith; because true Obedience, Obedience purely from the Heart, can no Man perform but by the Power of Faith. *Unbelieving and Disobedient Persons* are joined together, Tit. 1. 15, 16. One of the hardest Acts of Obedience, is to forgive an Offending Brother; which when our Saviour pressed on his Disciples, they reply with a Prayer, *Lord, increase our Faith*, Luke 17. 5. Increase of Faith they knew would make such hard Work of Obedience to be easy. We must be *Abraham's Child* en, before we can do the Works of *Abraham*; not his Children by natural Generation, but by believing. *They which are of Faith are the Children of Abraham*, Gal. 3. 7. So many Works of sincere and pure Obedience as thou canst shew, so many Witnesses of thy Faith thou producest.

Secondly, *True Faith believes and depends upon God in all things, and at all times.* It so believes every Word of Promise, as with

with an eye on the Good promised, to adventure all in an upright following the Lord. It so believes the purity of his Doctrine, as in a composed frame, and when free from the violence of Temptation, to chuse those Truths as the most pure and lovely Rules of Faith and Life. It so believes the Threatnings, that it fears to adventure on them, more than on the greatest Evils in the World: and is more joyful and thankful for deliverance from them, than from all that Man could do unto them. Yea, what-ever be the Face of God's Providences towards them, frowning and looking severely, yet they will not be beat out of good thoughts of God; like those of *Asaph's*, Psal. 73. 1. *Truly God is good to Israel, to them that are of a clean heart.* With this he prefaces all those Expressions of the Dis temper of his Soul, bred and breaking out from his Carnal Consideration of the great prosperity of the most wretchedly wicked, and the daily Bread of Sorrow which he had from the Hand of God, while with all his might he walked with God, in the ways of Holiness and Purity. It is not *Job's* Peculiar, but the temper common to all the Faithful, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*. Job 13. 15. They dare venture their All in this, on the hopes

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hopes of God's dealing truly with them, and performing his Promises to them in the other World.

Thirdly, *A Holy Boldness and Resolution of Access to the Throne of Grace.* Although the evidence of great Faithfulness, and a settled assurance of the Love of God in Christ, is necessary to such a holy boldness of Access, as shuts out all Fears and Doubts : yet where there is the least true Faith, it will not be an utter stranger to the Throne of Grace. Fear, from the belief of God's Threatnings and Love, and Hope, from the belief of Covenant-Promises, will cast such a Soul at the Foot of God : and tho its present doubtful and terrible apprehensions of the Anger of God, and the sense and force of its own Corruptions be such, as may be called the Belly of Hell ; yet they cannot keep the Soul, in which a spark of true Faith lives, from looking again and again to God's Holy Temple. *Then, I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again towards thy Holy Temple,* John 2. 4. Never doth there rest in such a Soul that Desperation, as utterly discourages and quenches a Spirit of Prayer. None is born a Believer, and abides dumb. And as this is the most proper evidence of the *Truth* of Faith, so our confidence of Acceptance, reverend

reverend familiarity with God, and frequent Addresses are the Evidences of the strength of our Faith.

Fourthly, *A desire of Christ's appearance, and his second coming.* We walk here by Faith, and not by sight; yet where true Faith is, it longs to be turned into sight. But here we must be somewhat cautious, lest we shut out true and saving Faith, while our Eyes are fixed on the Evidences of rather a strong Faith, and Faith of Assurance. Therefore, in short, where the least true saving Faith is, it would not lose it hopes to be accomplished at Christ's coming for all the World: yet its doubtings and distrust of its own sincerity, may mix some fear and trembling in its expectation; and the efficacy of pure Nature (by which the Soul and Body have so long made up one personal *compositum*) may put a *remora* to those hasting Affections to the day of Christ, which Faith fills the Sails of with a strong Gale. But when the Soul is attained to a Faith of Assurance, and some clear Visions of God, Christ, and the Life to come, its ordinary Ejaculations are, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, Rev. 22. And the very Object to which their Souls hasten, is, *the coming of the Day of God*: and the solemnizing of those Glorious and Eternal

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Nuptials, in order to which they have bin ever since their first Conversion espoused.

For the Fruits and Effects of Faith, with respect of our selves, take these four ;

First, *An effectual working of the Word upon our Hearts.* Faith makes God's Ordinances effectual ; *Which effectually worketh in you that believe,* 1 Theff. 2. 13. The Word works indeed on the Hearts of them who believe not, but 'tis mostly to a Rage and Rebellion against its truth and strictness ; or to a hardning and benumbing the Conscience, becoming thereby *a savour of death unto death.* But the Gospel *is the Power of God to every one that believes,* for prevalency with them to answer its holy Commands, and gracious Tenders and Proposals. Such fall under its Authority with a willing Mind. The Grace of Faith is in the Soul, doing the same as natural life, heat and strength in the Body ; by which both its Food and Physick have their good and due Effects. Every true Believer hath a Heart of Flesh to the Word, but of Stone and Steel to sinful Temptations ; its Conversion consists in changing its Aspects to God and Sin, to a direct contrary. The Devil and his Fallacies work effectually, while Children of Disobedience ; but when Believers,

Believers, it turns the efficacy to God's Authority in his Word; to which the Soul desires as perfect a conformity, as the Wax impressed hath to the Seal.

Secondly, *Sanctification of Heart and Life.* The Apostle discharges those Converts, *Acts 15. 9.* from the prophane Gentilism imputed by the converted *Jews* upon this ground; *God having purified their Hearts by Faith.* Faith, where-ever it is, devotes the Soul to God, enters it into the trade of Godliness or Godlikeness, that it may in all things please him. And though the Faith exercised here, will not go with the Saints to Glory; yet it prepares, by Purification, Christ's Spouse for his everlasting Embraces. As the Faith of Miracles fetched Healing Virtue from Christ to heal Bodies, so the Grace of Faith to heal Souls of their sinful Pollutions; which are their Diseases, Deformities, Impotencies, and all that is not in them what it should be.

Thirdly, *A strife with, and victory over Sin, Satan, Corruptions, and Temptations.* We must not suppose this to be meant of all these at all times; for then we should so far offend against the Generation of God's Children, as not to leave one in this World under that Name; but yet the whole Life is a Warfare with these Adver-

faries. And every Believer not only overcomes gross Temptations ordinarily, but also is so far from under the power of Sin, that he never lays down his Weapons, and becomes reconciled to it. So long as the least degree of the Graces of the Spirit dwells in the Soul, it will be lusting against the Flesh; though it cannot prevail as it would, *Gal. 5. 17.* Though *Esau* and *Jacob* are in one Womb, there will be struggling and contending. And although the Enemies of the Soul are always up in Arms contending, and sometimes prevailing; yet Faith not only keeps the Field, but ordinarily is the Victor. *This is the victory which overcometh the World, even our Faith, 1 John 5. 4.*

Fourthly, *True Faith grows.* Where Christians are faithful to their Means, and industrious, it increases to a greater strength and fruitfulness; but where it is weakest, yet it grows. As we say of a Tree or Branch, though not so fruitful and green as before; yet if it put forth but some Sprigs and Fruit, it grows, it is not dead. This is to be understood of the growth of all true Grace, else the notion may prove a snare: but where we grow not to a greater degree of strength and fruitfulness, 'tis our sin, shame, and loss; though it

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condemn us not as utterly void of Faith.

Now follows briefly the Trial of Faith by its Fruits, respecting our Brethren; the first is *Mercy, Love, Compassion, and Beneficence*; I bundle them together, for they cannot be separated. As Faith works by Love, so it works Love; and where the Affection of Love is, Mercy, Compassion, and doing good, can be no more wanting to our Brethren, the Objects of Love, than to our selves. Love is an uniting Grace, embodies Persons tied by its Bonds; yea, (as we said long before) makes them one Soul: by which Union there is such a sympathy and fellow-feeling, as moves us to them, as to our own Members. There is not in Scripture any Character of Faith more frequently and pathetically expressed than this of Love to the Brethren; and where 'tis wanting, Men may talk like Angels, without a conviction of true Faith, if the Scripture-Record is to be believed.

Secondly, *A desire and endeavouring to bring others into the Faith.* A Person having once tasted that the Lord is Gracious, and found the sweetness and goodness that is in Christ and his Ways, cannot, will not be so cruelly silent and omisive, as to suffer others within reach to perish in their

folly, without some motives to their recovery. Faith is a communicative Grace; and as it is so naturally, so it is so Obediently and Prudentially. A Christian knows he becomes no more poor by making others rich in Faith, than a Man's Fire or Candle gives the less Heat or Light by kindling others. Besides, exercise of Grace increases it, and where it brings in an increase of Souls to Christ's Kingdom, all the good those Converts shall ever be, do, or enjoy, will make some addition to the reward of such who were the Lord's Ministers of Conversion to them. O that this Character of Faith were to be found more apparently on its Professors, instead of those spots of Earthliness, Contention, Divisions, and Zeal for espoused singular Opinions, which are the great stumbling-blocks in the way of Sinners Conversion. Surely Faith in the Primitive Christians was of another kind than that of this Age, or at least more genuine. When the Woman of *Samarit* had found a Saviour, she forgets her Pitcher for haste, and setting aside the thing we call Civility, she runs from Christ to the City, to bring as many as she could to be blessed with the sight she had seen, and the words she had heard, *John 4.* The Church, when scattered by Persecution,

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were more concerned to gather in Souls to Christ, than for their Exile and loss of all they had in the World, *Acts* 11. 19. Certainly this is none of the least of those things that accompany that Faith which accompanies Salvation. And if thou canst be very solicitous, that thy Servants do their Work, and thy Children's Portions increase, and all thy Family have a good Aspect towards thy earthly Prosperity, and yet regard not what becomes of their Souls; 'tis a black mark on thine own, that it gives little credit to God.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Examination of Repentance.

HOW true Repentance may be discerned, is evident in *John Baptist's* Exhortation, *Matth.* 3. 8. *Bring forth Fruit therefore meet for Repentance, i. e.* such as become and evidence Repentance. And such Fruits are these which follow.

First, *Shame for Sin.* True Repentance hath ever Shame for its Companion. A real Penitent is not ashamed of his Re-

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pentance of Sin, but of the Sin it repents of. *I was ashamed, yea even confounded,* Jer. 31. 19. *Then shalt thou remember thy Ways, and be ashamed,* Ezek. 16. 61. The Heathens had an Opinion of blushing to be the colour of Vertue. Sure I am, that a Spiritual blushing is the colour of Repentance, where there is the shame of the Heart, though the Blood rise not into the Face.

There is a double shame: First, The shame of the taken *Thief*, Jer. 26. 26. A shame which arises from the disgrace of the discovery. 2. There is the shame of a Child. And this is such as arises, not so much from the disgrace of Sin before Men, as from the filthiness of Sin in its own Nature, and before God. It is a Character of a seared Conscience not to be ashamed in the first sence: but the second only evidences a sincere Penitent. For Men to be of the temper of those, *Jer. 6. 15. Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination?* Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush. I say, this discovers them far gone in Sin and hardness of Heart. Yet as not being ashamed at all, is part of one of the Sins first-born: so no shame but what arises from the sence of a God abused, and a Soul polluted, is
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the evidence of a true Penitent, though but a beginner in Grace.

Secondly, *A deep sorrow and hearty grief for Sin.* Wherein are two things to be considered; the Object of Sorrow, and its Greatness. For the first, The Object of Sorrow is Sin. It is the consideration of Sin as such, that especially afflicts. This is that which pricks at Heart. *Father, I have sinned,* Luke 15. 21. He was in a depth of misery; but of all that he is totally silent: as Sin was the burthen that pressed his Soul, all his Expressions were of sins grief. So it was with *David*, Psal. 51. 3, 4. *My Sin is ever before me.* A true Penitent is more grieved for the guilt of Sin, than for the fear of Hell. *Agur* implies Sin to be to him more fearful than suffering, when he begs not to be poor; not for the evil of Poverty, so much as its temptation to the evil of Sin. Prov. 30. 9. *Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of God in vain.* When *David* was threatned with sore punishments for his Sin; yet as grieved chiefly for Sin, he prays, 2 Sam. 24. 10. *I beseech thee take away the Iniquity of thy Servant.* How different was his frame from that of Impenitent *Pharaoh's*? Exod. 8. 8. *Intreat the Lord that he may take away the Frogs from me.* The Plague of the Frogs

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grieved him, but his Sin was no sore at all.

Repentance (where genuine) is so much concerned in sorrow for Sin's sake, that where God by express Pardon hath taken away the Punishment, and added thereto high Expressions of Love; yet it cannot so far pardon its own Sin, or it self rather having sinned, as then to forget it, or forbear pointing at it as its Sore and Grief.

David, after God had pardoned his Sin, cried out of his Sin, which notwithstanding was ever before him. And the Prodigal, after his Father had shewed him so much kindness as to meet, embrace, and kiss him, doth not forget to sorrow for, and confess his Sins, although it seemed rather a time for thankfulness, that did not prevent him bringing forth this Fruit meet for Repentance. A penitent Heart will remember the Sin that God forgets. So that 'tis plain and clear as Sun-beams, that true sorrow for Sin, hath Sin chiefly for his Object. *Pharaoh* may cry out, *I have sinned*, and *Judas* too, yet no true Repentance the cause, but the pain and punishment. *He that fears Hell only, fears not to sin, but to burn; he hates not Sin, but Hell.* Aug. Ep. 144. But such sorrow hath
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not the comfort of the Evidence of true Repentance. Deal honestly now with thy self, What is it grieves thee, Sin or Smart? or which bears the greater share in the cause of thy pain? It is no hard matter to resolve this Question, and 'tis as easy to understand the make of thy Repentance.

Secondly, *The depth and greatness of sorrow.* The sorrow of Repentance is not a sleight and superficial thing; 'tis a sorrow that reacheth the Heart and Soul. *Thus was my Heart grieved, and I was pricked in my Reins, Psal. 73. 21.* Or as it may be read, *thus was my Heart leavened.* Sin sowed at his very Heart, and thereby diffused its distaste throughout the whole Man. Peter upon his Repentance, *went out and wept bitterly.* The Tears of Repentance are Tears of Bitterness. Peter's Sorrow was so passionate, as was not meet for the view of the standers-by. Although God forbade baldness for the dead, as too great an expression of sorrow for any loss in the World; yet he commands it for Sin, as not excessive for so great a Cause. That Man's sorrow for Sin will be most bitter, to whom Sin is most bitter; and Sin is most bitter to every truly penitent Soul. *Heal me, O Lord, (saith David) for my Bones are vexed, Psal.*

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6. 2. It is such a Sorrow, as is to the Soul like Bones out of joint in the Body : no rest, no delight ; the whole Man full of grief and distraction, till the Lord speak Peace and Healing by reconciled Favour, and an overcoming Power against the Sins we sorrow for.

Thirdly, *A forsaking and rejecting all our former Lusts, and sinful ways.* That Repentance only is true which God accepts and hath promised Mercy to ; and that is only a forsaking Repentance. *He that confesseth, and forsaketh, shall have Mercy,* Prov. 28. 13. This was the frame of *Job's* Repentance, *If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more,* Job 34. 32. It is most apparent Hypocrisy to pretend Repentance of that which we have not a firm resolution to cast off and reject. *He is not a Penitent, (saith Bernard) but a Mocker, who pretending Repentance, fears not to make more work for Repentance.* Bern. de modo vivendi. Sin finds no Grace in the sight of a real Penitent ; such an one deals by Sin, as *Nehemiah* with *Tobiah* and his Furniture, *Nehem.* 13. 7, 8. He turns him out of his Chamber he had taken up in the Temple, and throws out all his Stuff after him. And as *Achan* was dealt with ; *Why hast thou troubled us ? the Lord shall trouble thee this day,* and

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and all Israel stoned him with stones, Josh. 7.25. Its wrath against Sin is not only such as the Sun goes down upon, but the whole Life, yea Eternity is affected with it. 'Tis a Repentance and Displeasure, never, never repented of. Baptism is called the *Baptism of Repentance*; now as Baptism is a washing the Body from carnal Pollutions, so Repentance is a washing the Soul from moral or spiritual Defilements; and that not only by Pardon and Remission, but also by personal Sanctification or Separation. Ephraim shall say, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* True Repentance is mortal to Sin, as 'tis a recovery to the Soul: but if a Man could weep his eyes out, and yet Sin abide in the Affections, and in its reigning Power, it were to little purpose.

Fourthly, *A walking in Holiness and Obedience.* Bringing forth Fruits meet for, or evidencing of Repentance, is to be fruitful in Holiness. Repentance is not only an emptying thing, but it fills up its room with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Christ to the praise of God. It doth not leave the Soul a meer Desert. As it plucks up with the one hand, it plants with the other. *Reckon ye your selves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.* There is a change made from the unfruitful Works
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of darkness, to those that are truly fruitful. The old Man is crucified, and the new Man is put on. The natural Faculties have changed their Master, and become Servants of Righteousness unto Holiness. The whole Man being grafted into a new Stock, brings forth Fruit that hath another relish than that of wild depraved Nature.

CH A P. XIII.

The Examination of Love.

Love hath its Counterfeits as well as other Graces. Let Love (saith the Apostle) *be without dissimulation.* ἄνευ ὑποκρίσεως, *without Hypocrisy*, Rom. 12. 9. *unto unfeigned love of the Brethren*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. *My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed, and in Truth*, 1 John 3. 18. Love, which lies all in the Tongue, is hypocritical Love. Naphthali gave goodly words; but that being all, was not any Character of his goodness. These following appearance, of Love to the Brethren, may be all but the Counterfeits of Love.

First,

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First, A Man may hold an outward correspondency with them: But Converse and Peace is short of Love. 2. He may prefer and honour them, yet not love them. And this may arise not only from politick Ends, but also from a respect to some Gifts of Nature, or other Endowments short of Grace. So *Pharaoh* honoured *Joseph*; *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Daniel*; and *Laban*, *Jacob*. 3. He may also reverence them. *Herod* revered *John*, feared him. Grace and Piety have a Majesty in them, which commands respect even from its haters. The People magnified the Believers, *Acts* 51. 13. who yet loved not them so well as to be of their Number. 4. He may do them many kind Offices, yet not love them with a sincere and holy Love. *Jeroboam* could invite a Prophet to Dinner, and the very *Barbarians* shew courtesie to *St. Paul*. 5. He may desire to die their Death. This was *Balaam's* case; *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my latter end be like his*. 6. He may honour their memory when dead, and gone. So did the *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 23. *They garnished the Sepulchres of the Righteous*: But for all this, were not righteous; and so far from loving the Righteous for their Righteousness, that they thought them
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best when farthest off. And as I have proved, that any one of these things may be where impiety dwells; so it is true, that they may dwell altogether in one Person, where there is not one spark of holy Love to God's holy Ones. Thus much may serve for the Negative part of Trial: Let us now consider some Marks which evidence such on whom they are to be found, lovers of the Brethren, with a Love not only unfeigned, but also a Love that deserves the Name of Grace.

First, *A Man who loves the Brethren with a gracious Love, loves them for their Graces sake.* God's Image on them commands their Affections. Holiness is such a Loadstone, as where ever 'tis discerned, it draws such a Man's Love. 'Tis one thing for a Man to love a Child of God, another to love him as a Child of God. Then Love is true, when 'tis pure; and then 'tis pure, when Grace in the Object is its pure and only Motive; or at least, if there were no other consideration but that to draw Love, it would be forcible.

Secondly, *Where true Love to the Brethren is, it will exceed Love to any others.* Such an one will love none like them. Christian Love bestows a double portion of it self on Christ's *Benjamins*, the Sons of his
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right hand. There are no Parts, Vertue, or any other thing truly beautiful; but a Child of God ought to love *whatsoever things are lovely*. But as 'tis a Duty, so 'tis the frame of a good Soul to love most where is most Beauty; and that is where Grace is, which is Godliness. And although it bear no proportion, yet it carries in it some similitude to the Divine Being. Holy *David* was so far enamoured with the Saints, that his Love to others seemed altogether stifled by it, or at least below his notice in the hour wherein he considered his Love to them. *To the Excellent in whom is all my delight*, Psal. 16. 3.

Thirdly, *Such an one loves all the Saints*. As no other Qualification but Grace can draw that kind and strength of Love, so the meanness of Person, Parts, Estate, yea, the many deformities of sinful Infirmities, shall not withdraw their Love from them. I fear yet there are many good Souls who love not all God's People, yea, it may be, hate, instead of loving them: But this doth no way invalidate this Mark; for were there not something that (with them at least) casts a Veil over their Saintship, and renders them under some other worse Character, they could not but love them. O that

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that there were no need of this Charity ! and that the Devil, that make-bate among the Saints, might no more so far beguile any upright Hearts, as to make them believe, that many of God's dear Children are but Bastards, and unworthy of that worthy Name, because they fall not under some by-Notion, which they have too hotly affected, and put too much of Christianity in.

Fourthly, True Love delights in the society of the Saints. *Love the Brotherhood* is their practice. The genuine sence of the Phrase is, Love the Saints in Fellowship, in that united Gospel-Polity and Order, wherein they are made capable of the most pleasant and profitable Communion. It was a foremenace, *Zech. 11. 14. I will break the Brotherhood between Judah and Israel.* Their natural Relation could not be broken, (no more is it in the choice of God's Children, who shall be their Brethren, for of *his own Will begat he us*) but their mutual Love and Fellowship may be broken ; but it is upon misunderstandings. *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy Precepts, Psalm. 119. 63.* The Hypocrisy of many Men's Love is made apparent by their taking more delight in the company of vain Persons, than of the Righteous ;

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ous; as if that Scripture were false, *The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour.* Where the serious Godliness of a Person works a weariness and nauseousness, How can such a one say he loves them, while his Heart is not with (but so much against) them? If there be any Heaven to a Child of God on Earth; 'tis in Communion with God in his Church, and among the Saints.

Fifthly, True Love is not easily angered. *Charity suffers long — is not easily provoked,* 1 Cor. 13. It will bear much ere it will break. It is like God, who being Love, *is slow to anger.* He is not easily provoked, yet is easily reconciled. The Apostle when he had exhorted to the hard Works of *forbearing and forgiving one another,* Col. 3. 13. in the next verse directs to the sure means; *And above all things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection.* A peevish and implacable Spirit is the highest contradiction to a Holy Love.

Question.

If a Man wrong me, am I bound to forgive him, though he acknowledg not his Offence, nor seeks Reconciliation? And must I forbear the Sacrament, if (he omitting those Duties) I have not forgiven him?

Ans.

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Answer.

First, A Man is bound so far to forgive, as to retain no Wrath or Malice against the Person offending, though he ask not forgiveness: And if a Man do not forgive so far, he is not fit for the Holy Communion.

2. Although we ought so far to forgive, yet we are not bound to express this forgiveness to him, unless he signify Repentance, and desire it, *Luke 17. 14.*

3. If the Offence be matter of loss in thy Goods, or otherwise repairable; thou art not bound to forgive or remit that kind of satisfaction, farther than it is given thee: But if the Offence be such as favours of enmity, thou art not bound to take an obstinate and unreconciled Enemy into thy Bosom or Society, *Matth. 5. 23, 24.* The Bar is against the Delinquent Party. *If thy Brother have ought against thee*, not, if thou have ought against thy Brother. And indeed if the Offences & Unreconcilableness of another, may put a Bar betwixt me and the Priviledges of the Gospel; it were in the power of an hypocritical and malicious Professor, to make those Blessings of none Effect, to whom and when his Lusts prompt him: but this is not to be admitted. Therefore if thou do thy Duty towards another,

another, thou mayest chearfully sit down at the Lord's Table, making no scruple for Conscience-sake in this Matter.

C H A P. XIV.

The Examination of Obedience.

THE last thing whose Truth I proposed to be examined, is Obedience. And whether we consider its Habit, or particular Acts; there is not any thing pleaded as a Character of sincerity of Grace, found guilty of more Deceit and Hypocrisy. When *Samuel* had pinched *Saul* with so close a Conviction, as was in the bleating of the Sheep and lowing of the Oxen in his Ears; yet *Saul* stands to it, and persists in his not only asserting, but also glorying in his Obedience. *I have performed the Commandment of the Lord, 1 Sam. 15. 13. I have obeyed the Voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, vers. 20.* But *Saul's* Obedience was in *Samuel's*, or rather the Lord's sight, the highest rank of Disobedience, no less than Rebellion and Stubbornness. There was not an Ox
or

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or Sheep, whose lowing or bleating did not proclaim him a Rebel to the King of Heaven.

True Obedience may be known by its Grounds, Ends, and Properties, all which we shall consider in order, and first its Grounds.

The first Ground I shall Name is, *The Will and Authority of God*. Sincere Obedience hath its Law in God's Sovereignty. What-ever hath its Command, is therefore in the Conscience of an Obedient Soul a Law not to be objected against, much less superseded by all the Cavils of the thing call'd *Reasoning*. *I am the Lord*, is that which puts Power into his Precepts, and meets with *I am thy Servant* for its Echo. There is not a sincere obedient Soul, but is herein of *David's* temper; *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy Precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes!* Psal. 119. 4, 5. As true Faith hath the Word of Promise for its Foundation, so true Obedience the Word of God's Command. And therefore the Apostle, 1 *Thess.* 4.3. gives this as an irrefragable tie to their Obedience, *For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification*. And indeed no Obedience can be called Divine, but what hath an eye to a Divine Authority as its motive.

Second

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Second Ground of Obedience which is Sincere, is *Sincere Faith*. That is true Gospel-Obedience which flows from the Faith of the Gospel: a Receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, a taking hold of the Gospel-Covenant. The Apostle makes this its distinguishing Title, Rom. 16. 26. *The Obedience of Faith*. The Obedience of a Man who rejects Christ, is but Reprobate Obedience. As no Obedience that is genuine can be brought forth but by our Union to Christ as our Root, so none will be accepted of God, which doth not relish of that Divine Root. Gold it self, however glistering, had no Holiness in it, but what it received from the Altar.

Third Ground is, *The Love of God in Christ*. Though sincere and genuine Obedience must be spontaneous and voluntary, yet the constraints of God's Love to us, and our love to God in Christ, is not only no contradiction to it, but also essential to its Being. Herein consists the filialness of sincere Obedience, that it is not slavish nor mercenary. Love supplies the room of Bonds. 'Tis that which lays on it the Obligation of Necessity, and is Wages also to it self. *Son, go to work to day in my Vineyard*, was enough to the Penitent, though no Wages was propounded, *Mat.*
21.28.

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21. 28. *The Love of Christ constraineth us.*
 2 Cor. 5. 14. *Be ye followers of God as dear Children,* Ephes. 5. 1. Some Men yield Obedience meerly for the love of self-credit, and other such-like low and carnal Respects; or at most for fear of Wrath. These are obedient Slaves. But if all these Considerations were laid aside, sincere Obedience would live on the single provision of Love.

Secondly, Sincere Obedience hath for its Ends the Glory of God, Conformity to him, and eternal Happiness in the enjoyment of him. It sets the Crown on the Head of Christ, and desires no greater reward than what God hath annexed to such a frame and deportment. It knows that in aiming at God's Glory, it shall not miss the Mark of its own Happiness; and therefore directs its Obedience to that End, with a delightful security and satisfaction, that the Results and Consequences will be all that can be wished by a Soul made meet to be a partaker of *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. It rejoices in hope of the Glory of God; both in respect of that which redounds from the Creature to him, and from him to the Creature. *I have hoped for thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments,* Psal. 119. 166. *I will behold thy Face in Righteousness: I shall*

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shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, Psalm. 17. 15. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Phil. 1. 21. These Scriptures abundantly express the Holy Aims of a Holy Obedience, joining those things together which God hath joined, and will never permit to be separated.

Thirdly, The Properties of sincere Obedience are, 1. *Universal* in respect of the *Subject*. The whole Man is subjected to God, Body, Soul, and Spirit. And herein consists its Integrity, which always accompanies Sincerity. 2. In respect of the *Object*, its Heart and Soul is bent to obey all God's Commands. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandments, Psal. 119. 6. לא אבושׁ* I shall not blush, or be put to shame. Some derive our *English* word *abashed*, from this *Hebrew, Bosh*. Integrity and Uprightness, as it preserves from falling into a damnable, so also from falling into a damned state. Such a frame will stand, and not be confounded in the Judgment. And the *Psalmist* tells us, that an universal respect to God's Commands, renders a Man upright in the sight of God. 3. In respect of Time, 'tis Obedience at all times. *Will the [Hypocrite] delight himself in the Almighty?*

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mighty? Will he always call upon God?
 Job 27. 10. The Obedience that is sincere, is not a fit, but the constant temper and *Craſis* of the Soul. The whole Life is a walking with God. Its diversions from Obedience are its *Errata*, but its Obedience is the Volume of the Book from the Title-Page to the end. Temporising Obedience will never prove a Man sincere, nor reach the Eternal Rewards. To leave off to be wise, and do good upon Politick, is to deny that ever we began to be wise, or to do good on sincere Grounds. Princely *David* may speak for all the rest of the sincere Servants of Christ, in *Psal.* 119. 12. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy Statutes always unto the end.*

Secondly, Its Property is to be *ready to obey*. But this must be understood of its more ordinary frame. *Jacob* deferred to build an Altar, and *Jonah* fled as far as he could from God, and a Duty he deemed dangerous and disgraceful. Such leaden-heel'd, and unwilling Obedience, God's sincere Servants (in the main) may sometimes render. But ordinarily their Obedience is expressed in the language of *David*, *Psal.* 119. 60. *I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

Thirdly, It is *free and unconstrained.*
Thy

Thy People shall be a willing People in the day of thy Power. It is not grudgingly, or of necessity, but from the Heart and Choice. *His Commandments are not grievous,* 1 John 5. 3. It rejoices and sings in the ways of the Lord; as such do who are where and what they most desire. What are Chains to others, are Ornaments to them. What is a Prison to others, is Liberty to them. Sin and withdrawals from God suffocate their Delights; but they live when they stand fast in the Lord.

C H A P. XV.

The Growth and Wants of Grace Examined.

AS there is Grace in Truth, in opposition to meer Pretences and Appearances, so there is Grace in its Degrees and Growth. As in Heaven, so on Earth, the Members of Christ (though all living and true Members) differ from one another in Glory, as Stars of a greater and lesser magnitude and lustre. We read of no less than seven Stages of growth, by which the Saints are distinguished on this side that Glory, they shall attain unto when trans-

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planted

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planted out of this Wilderness into the Paradise of the other World.

1. Their being *formed* Christians, which is by Christ's being *formed* in them, Gal. 4. 19.
2. Their *Birth*, John 3. 6. *So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.*
3. Their *Infancy*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new-born Babies.* 1 Cor. 3. 1. *Babies in Christ.*
4. Their state of *Child-hood*. *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child,* 1 Cor. 13. 11.
5. Their *well-grown Age*. *I write unto you young Men, because ye are strong, &c.* 1 John 2. 13.
6. Their *full grown Age*. *Men in Christ,* Ephes. 4. 13. 14.
7. Their *Old Age*. *I write unto you Fathers,* 1 John 2. 13.

All these are the several Gradations of the New-Creature, yet are not denominated from the time of their standing, but the degree of their proficiency. Many who are born Saints, may see, to their shame, such who were in Christ long after them, to be in the lustre and degrees of Grace by many degrees before them; yea, become young Men for strength, and Fathers for sagacity in the things of God; while they (like
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Loyterers) tarry as far behind as almost where they began their Race ; and as like Babes in Christ still, as very much ignorance and spiritual Weakness can make them. And although a right unto, and real fitness for the Lord's Supper, is not to be denied to the least of all Saints ; yet as it concerns all true Believers not to make work for Shame and Repentance (backwardness in Grace being our sin) nor to lose the fulness of the sweet and strength of this Feast of fat Things : so far it concerns them both to grow, & also to know their growth in Grace. And indeed where there is not a growth in Grace under the enjoyment of such means, the fulness of the Lord's Table will reproach them of disordely and distempered Souls, more than their leanness can charge a dry insipid and virtulefs quality on that mighty Provision.

First then, Spiritual Growth is accordingly accompanied with Spiritual Stength. *As is the Man, so is his Might.* A well-grown Christian is a steady walker with God in a Storm, and against a crowd of Opposers ; He is not carried away with every Wind of Doctrine, nor flinches at every fiery Trial. *If thou faint in the day of Adversity, thy strength is but small,* Prov. 24. 10. Observe thy activity in Duty,

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and thy ease and delight therein ; and also with what success thou grapplest with Temptation, and the Conclusion will be easie, how far thy Grace is grown. And this is a much better course than making thy guess by the distinctness or sublimity of thy Notions of Divine Things ; all which the Devil may out-do thee in, and thy Soul may be much more puffed and swell'd with Pride under their considerations, than edified or built in Grace, which is the Health and Substance of Christianity.

Secondly, It may be judged by thy Spiritual Appetite, (I call it a Spiritual Appetite, because there may be a very hot Appetite to some Spiritual Things, which yet is but Carnal ; yea a Dog-Appetite, from a vicious Heat, and consuming quality in the Soul.) Thus 'tis with many hard Students, and Sermon-devourers, who are enamoured with elegance of Stile, and speculations only of the Matter, either to please the Fancy of themselves, or exchange for Provisions for the Flesh, take it in what sense you will.

Of the former of these, the Schoolmen were not of least remarque, whose vitious hunger fell chiefly on the very Bones of Divinity, to the deluding, choaking, and starving the Souls of many, if not their own.

But

But to my purpose, Growth of Grace will increase Hunger, and form a better Appetite; an Appetite to the more solid Food, and to a more profitable Digestion. The sweetness and strength such an one finds by Ordinances, renews the desire of their Enjoyments; yea, maintains a habitual thirst of them. It were well if many Professors were not so far from this Mark of Growth in Grace, as almost, if not altogether a neglect of their Spiritual Food. The new Birth of such is rather to be questioned than their growth. *My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!*

Thirdly, Growth in Grace is ordinarily visible to others, yea more than to our selves. Its Heat and Life is most within, while its Light and Brightness is most visible without us. It is mostly to our selves like the Seed which grows up we know not how, while to others 'tis matter of apparent Observation. The Voice, the Visage, are the manifest tokens of Growth. *A Man's Wisdom maketh his Face to shine*, Eccles. 8. 1. Every one who believes, is a new Creature, this is the Essential Change; yet Growth makes such a change from Childhood, as leaves scarcely the Person within knowledge. The Complexion and Countenance

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of a grown Christian for Divine Beauty, a healthful and vigorous Aspect, will evidence it self. *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, &c.* 1 Cor. 13. 11. But when a Man, he put away childish things; his behaviour in Countenance, Word, and Deed, expressed a greater Spiritual gravity. And certainly, as a carnal light deportment in Word, and Deed, proves a Person but a Babe in Grace; so the contexture of a heavenly and well-ordered Discourse and Conversation is no mean evidence of a growth in Grace.

I shall now descend to give some brief Testimonies of the increase of Faith. A grown Faith is comparatively great, in respect of the common size of Christians, and the first size of our own. *O Woman! great is thy Faith,* Matth. 15. *I have not found so great Faith no not in Israel.* It performs great Obedience; bears with patience and cheerfulness great Sufferings: is rich in good Works; carries the Soul as on Eagles Wings to live in Heaven, and to have its feet on the neck of those things which others set their Hearts on; gains great victories over strong Lusts and Temptations; believes a promise against a current of seemingly contradicting Providences; loves an angry God, will neither depart from, nor think

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think hardly of him; though he hid his Face, yea though he frown, chide, and smite.

For the examination of our Wants, 'tis necessary, (when we address to the Lord's Table) that we may direct our special Faith and Desires for a suitable supply. We should herein imitate those who are going to the Market, who carry their forethoughts with them of what is wanting in the Family. The Lord's Supper is a great Market, yea, a great Mart, where all that we can want or wish is to be had for our Souls, and 'tis pitty that ignorance of our Needs should send us thence without our necessary Provision. Say to thy Soul, Dost thou not want Faith, Love, Sense of pardoning Mercy, strength against Sin, a mortified Heart, quickning Grace? &c. Be not put off with a dumb-silence, or a senseless unconcernedness. Suffer not thy self to rest till thy Heart hath received those deep impressions of thy special Wants, as may direct thy Faith to their supply; and put forth its strength in wrestling with thy Lord, who delights to be so overcome, and made a Prey of. Our Lord Jesus invites us to a happy freedom, and encourages us to a reverend boldness at this Feast. There is not a Dith, a Dainty,

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for necessity or delight, with which his Table is furnished; from partaking of which he prohibits, or discountenances any of his Children. His Language then is, *Eat, O Friends, yea drink abundantly O Beloved. Buy of me Gold, &c.* And all the price on your part, is but a begging willing Faith. *Wilt thou be made whole?* John 5. 6. And as not well pleased with general Requests, provokes thee to be particular. *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* John 5. 41.

And indeed 'tis a sense of particular Wants, which ordinarily meets with an Answer of Grace. General Requests imply Self-fulness, Ignorance, Unbelief, and Heartlessness. Such a frame will provoke Christ to send thee away empty. *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, will be no great Riches to such a Soul. Therefore as ever thou wouldst have good speed in this great Work, get thine Errands to Christ ready; let not this highest Act of Religion be without its proposed Ends, which would write folly on the most inconsiderable undertaking.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Habitual Graces to be quickned as Preparative to Receiving.

THat which St. Paul advises, 2 Tim. 1. 6. *Stir up the Gift (or Grace) that is in thee,* is of special use before we enter on this great Action. Here especially all our Graces should be in a firme, which they will not easily arise to, after all the damps our Hearts have taken in our converse with Earth and Sin. And therefore the Bellows must to work, before we have this use of our utmost fervor. A Faith half asleep, a Love luke-warm, and a Repentance crude and indigested, will make but small Earnings and Improvements at the Lord's Table. He that will feed hungrily, and digest well, must stir up natural heat before set Meals. Oan Heart warmed with the kindly heat of active Graces, will sweetly prepare the Soul to hunger, relish, and thrive on these Spiritual Dainties.

Quest. But how should a Man thus quicken his Faith and other Graces?

Ans. Take some one or more of the Promises, and set thy Faith on work on them.

Come

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Come, for all things are ready. Add to this, *Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Add to the Meditation on Promises some Scripture-Instances suitable to those Promises. The Lame, the Blind, the Lepers came to Christ, and he did not cast them off; they found the best welcome, even all, and more than they came for. Apply these to thy own Soul thus, I never find Christ displeased with any that came to him for Mercy, for Body or for Soul; although I find him complaining of those that would not come to him *that they might have Life,* John 5. 40. My Conscience discourages me, my Unbelief fetters me, my Sins testify to my Face, that I am unworthy of the least of the Lord's Mercies. But what then? Shall I stay while Conscience speaks more friendly? that will never be till it turn Flatterer, or be sprinkled with the Blood of Christ. Shall I stay till I find no clogs of unbelief? Then take the foolish course of keeping a distance from the Root and Life of Faith, without whom, and his influence, Faith will faint and fail altogether. Shall I stay while I am sinful? that will be never; or if it should come to pass, I were then out of Christ's Commission, who came to save *Sinners*, not the *Righteous*. Well, I know nothing by my self so bad, but others as bad have bin

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bin welcome to Christ; and therefore if I have bin a Prodigal, and what not? My Heart being willing to enter into the Lord's Family and Service, I will go as the Prodigal, and hope for some Fragments (at least) of his kind entertainment.

If that Parable of the Prodigal was by Christ intended as a Glass for poor Sinners, wherein to behold the tender Heart, melting Bowels, cordial Smiles, and blessed Entertainment from God of a returning Sinner: I will cast my Eye thereon to spie out somewhat for my encouragement. But the first glance amazes me, How do I behold a throng of Testimonies, that the Father out-does the Prodigal Son, in all his motions toward mutual Reconciliation, and the most amicable Embraces?

I see that the Father first sets eye on the coming Prodigal. O what comfort here! No sooner doth a Man look towards God, but God looks after him, and directs his eye towards him, and finds him out. *His Father saw him*, Luke 15. 20. yea he *saw him a great way off*. It had bin singular mercy to have expressed any Tokens of kindness, when the Prodigal drew very near. More than this, I see his Father *had compassion on him*. Surely God is ready to forgive, is full of Bowels. I see farther that
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it was great and powerful Compassion, for he ran. He seemed not to have patience till his Prodigal Son came at him; nor would the transporting Joys which had captivated him, suffer him so much as to keep state in his Motions to his returning Son. O how is God overcome with Love, when his poor Creatures have so far overcome their Lusts, as to be in motion Godward! O that when Sinners come to God, God should run, Mercy should run to meet them! The pinched starved Sinner arises and comes, but God who needs neither Men, Angels, nor Heaven, (being a Heaven to himself) he runs. Why then, O my Soul, shouldst thou be slow and lag in going to God?

But what greeting do I behold, when a wronged neglected God meets with an unjust Apostate Rebel foolish Sinner returning? No Upbraidings, no Frowns, no Wrath, no Spurnings at his sinful Misery. O no! He falls on his Neck, not to beat him down with Blows and Wounds, but to comfort him with kind Embraces. He regards not all that Guilt, Meanness, and stink of the Lusts he had served; the beginnings of Repentance had won his Heart, and its fragrantcy out-scented all his sinful vileness. O the stupendous and astonishing

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ing goodness of God ! If he embraces him while he is in these loathsome Rags, smells of the Swine and Swill, Lusts and Vanity ; what endearedness will there be, when his Raiment shall be changed, and he shall look like one of the Sons of the most High ?

But this Vision of God-like Mercy is not yet at an end. *And he kissed him.* Is this the manner of Men, O Lord ? Hath the great God his Peer on Earth for condescending Love ? What could be expected, but for the Prodigal to be kill'd, or at least kickt out of Doors ? But to be kissed by God without more ado, let silence with amazement take the room of the highest Phrases, too empty, too low, to attempt or offer at expressing this Love. *Esau* fell on his Brother *Jacob's* Neck, but they were not far from Equals in Nature, and *Jacob* was his better in Grace. What was that to the Bowels of God ? 'Tis observable, that over the *Hebrew* word for *kissed*, Gen. 33. 4. there are three extraordinary pricks or pointings, to render it very notable. What remarques then will the kisses of God bear, of such a Father to such a Son ? And now, O my Soul, if thou wert sure that all this good should be unto thee, wouldst not thou think it worth thy going to thy Father's House, shaking off thy Unbelief,

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belief and all thy miseries together?

It may be you will say, This was first Repentance, Faith, or Conversion. What is all this to renewing Repentance, and exciting Graces for the Lord's Supper? I Answer, That Converting Work, Faith, and Repentance, dwells not within the confines of a single Day, Month, or Year; but takes possession of the whole Life of an upright Soul. And though we (as if Divine Love, and its comfortable Effects, perished in the using) cool to those Blessings, which sometimes have bin as a holy Fire in our Bosoms: God is no such Changeling; Repentance, Faith, and all Grace in their renewed Acts, shall find themselves well aspected, and kindly entertained by him. And if we consider how apt we are to gather Soil and Pollutions, and to lose the vivacity of our Graces in the crowd and throng of worldly Concerns; we shall find that as the Priests washed their Hands, and their Feet, at every fresh entrance into the Tabernacle, *Exod.* 40. 31, 32. so we had need be washing and trimming our Hearts, especially every time we approach this Holy of Holies (as I may say) the Lord's Supper, the Heavenly Feast, the Divine Cheer and Communion.

C H A P. XVII.

*Of exciting earnest Desires after Christ,
and expectation of his Benefits.*

IF Christ so vehemently longed for the Passcover, (the Type and immediate Forerunner of his own Passion) in behalf of others, as is expressed *Luke 22.15. With desire have I desired to eat this Passcover with you.* How then should we long for that Feast, wherein a Crucified Jesus is conveyed to our Souls, in that Life and Peace which his Death and Sorrows purchased? Well may they be deemed unworthy of that Soul-cheering Wine and blessed Morsel, whose Deserts reach not so far as sincere and fervent desires. Thirsting after Christ hath the promise of his Enjoyment; the Milk and Wine above price is to be had with this; and without which, all the Kingdoms of the World are a value that will be contemned. And as the Promise is made to Thirsting, so without it the Cheer would be without taste. *To the hungry every bitter thing is sweet:* but without hungring, Christ himself the Fountain and Epi-
tome

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to me of all good and sweetness would be unfavoury. Our hunger, as it is all our worthiness, so 'tis the greatest part of our preparedness. *For he satisfieth the longing Soul, and fills the hungry with goodnesse,* Psal. 107. 9. *I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry ground,* Isa. 44. 3. A Soul drawn forth after God and Christ, will find the Heart and Hand of God enlarged to it. *Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it,* Psal. 81. 10. An enlarged Heart shall meet with an enlarged Hand.

Want of hungering and thirsting after Christ, renders us not only empty, but also stopt Vessels; which if they were thrown into the Ocean it self, would be never the fuller. Christ will do that for us which he commanded at the Wedding, *Fill the Water-pots (with Wine) up to the brim.* A hungerless Soul hath no capacity for Christ; and according to our hunger will be our filling. O how sad to go empty away from such Cheer and Treasures, and all from our listless indisposed Hearts; and hereby give Christ occasion to send this Complaint after us, *Ye are not straitned in me, but in your own Bowels.* Yet let me warn you not to take up with the Sluggard's desire, meer idle Wishes; *For the*
Soul

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Soul of the Sluggard desireth, and hath not,
Prov. 13. 4. yea, which is worse, *The desire of the Slothful killeth him,* Prov. 21. 25.
To none is there greater danger, than to those who lean the weight of their Souls on idle hungrings. Compassion it self will suffer such to perish.

Quest. How should a Man get his Heart enlarged after Christ?

I Answer, First get a sense of his Worth and thine own Wants. The Prodigal when pinched, will have a mind homeward, being sensible of his own Wants, and the fulness of his Father's House.

Secondly, Labour in private to stir up Appetite. Enlarge thy Heart by Prayer; one Duty will prepare for another. The same God that fills thy Heart must open it. Customary Formality undoes us. 'Tis our Duty to labour for the Meat that perishes not. But if we do not by Spiritual Endeavours get up our Soul-appetites, the Meat of Eternal Life will be but perishing Food to us.

But alas! What Mistakes are Men under, who are yet so desirous of the Sacrament, that he which shall deny it them, though on grounds of apparent Ignorance or prophaneness, shall be starved out of his Faithfulness, reproached out of his Duty
and

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and shut out or banished from his Ministry, if they had their Will? These Men seem burning hot in their desires of this Ordinance. But alas! 'Tis too ordinary that this Fire is not kindled from Heaven, but from a worse cause. Custom, reputation for Christians, superstitious respect to the meer formality of the Ordinance, are the best Trinity they adore in it. And it were somewhat better, if their Zeal arose not from a worse cause than all these, even a desire of securing their ungrounded Peace, while their Hearts and Lives are woful Enemies to God, and the Power of Godliness.

But if we would know whether our hungry and thirsting after this Ordinance be right, let us lay our Hearts to these following Tokens.

First, A true hungry, &c. is carried after Christ as its Object, that the Soul might enjoy Fellowship and Communion with him, and those needful and Soul-blessing Benefits that he purchased for Believers.

Secondly, It flows from a sense of Self-emptiness, and of Christ's fulness; or from a remembrance of former strength and sweetness, which we have found from Christ in this Ordinance.

Thirdly, It is attended with a Holy kind of Impatience till it enjoy the Ordinance

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nance, and Christ in it. True desires in case of delays are turned into Longings. My Soul thirsteth for God, when shall I come, &c.

Fourthly, Nothing can quiet the Heart, or satisfie it without Christ and the Blessings which are in and from him; no more than Gold or any thing else however valued, can satisfie the natural hunger and thirst.

Fifthly, Great delight and contentment in feeding on Christ. *I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my taste.*

I shall here subjoin the strong grounds, on which a Soul may hunger after, and expect great things in this solemn Feast. When *Peter* and *John* went up to the Temple, they said to the Cripple, *Look on us.* They being Persons of eminent Worth and Power, it rationally drew forth the expectations of the poor Wretch, who in the issue found their Bounty beyond his Thoughts. How much more may we ground great Expectations from Christ, who not only commands us to look on him, have him in our remembrance, but gives us his Body and Blood, for not only our Eyes, but our Souls to feed on: bids us take him as a Crucified Saviour, and live

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live on the provision of those unsearchable Riches that are in him as our own. *Job* cleared himself (as from a great Crime) of causing the Eyes of the Widow to fail, *Job* 31. 16. As that which not only was Uncharitableness, but also a strong savour of Oppression. And can we think that an all-sufficient and compassionate Jesus, will be herein guilty? Can we imagine that he should raise our Expectations, and kindle our Hungrings, only to torment us with their Disappointment? It cannot be, 'tis inconsistent with the substance and series of his Design; yea, with his very Nature. Christ will mock none but those, whose pride and folly spurns his bounty, and prefers Sin and Vanity before him as their Deity and Dependance: and that for refusing his faithful Tenders, and trusting to their own Delusions.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII.

God to be sought by Prayer in a special manner before Receiving, and some Objections answered.

THIS is the last thing I shall treat of by way of preparation. No Business (especially of Concernment) should be undertaken without Prayer. And indeed all Preparation without this, to secure their efficacy, may justly be blasted. *The Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the Answer of the Tongue is from the Lord,* Prov. 16. 1. When all our part is done, if God do not his, there will be nothing done to purpose. 'Tis he must crown with the Blessing. All will be barren if he say not, *be fruitful.*

Secondly, Prayer sanctifies every Mercy, every Ordinance. *All things are sanctified by the Word and Prayer,* 1 Tim. 4. The Word instructs us what we should do and use, and how; but without Prayer, the most exact frame of our Actions otherwise, will be but lame and unserviceable.

Thirdly, The Blessings of the Ordinance coming in upon faithful Prayer, add a
sweet

sweetness to them. Upon these Considerations therefore let us be stirred up to this Duty in our Families and Closets, as well as with the Minister in the Celebration of the Ordinance: yea, if need be, to accompany it with Religious Fasting; for the casting out those Devils, which other means without it, may prove too short of. The neglect of this ('tis to be feared) hath made the Feast of the Lord's Supper barren of that joy and strength to many, which otherwise it might have afforded.

But after all that I have said, and (it may be) you have done with all your might according to these Rules, you find your Hearts still unprepared and out of frame, dull, poor, unbelieving, dead, wandring, and full of Faults, nothing almost as it should be, you will enquire what you shall do, how you shall be satisfied in such a case.

I answer, first, It may be some satisfaction to thee, that thy want of diligence hath not bin the cause of the disorder thou complaineſt of: and more than that, thou haſt a precious proof herein of thy uprightness and integrity, which may be esteemed a great reward of all the toil thou haſt taken to get thy Heart in a better posture. And although it would have bin more comfortable

comfortable to thy self at present to have felt the Fire of holy Affections kindling into a clear flame, while thou art blowing the Coals; yet thy Sincerity may meet with a gale from the Spirit of God, either on the brink of the Ordinance, or whiles thou art sighing over thy deadness in the midst of it; as may be time enough to make thee a plentiful Harvest, and give thee a greater advantage to know the freeness of the Grace of God, to be dispensed when he pleases, as *the Wind blows where it listeth*. Yea, hereby the unexpected breathings of the powerful Spirit on thy Heart, may be not only more sweet, but captivating thee into an admiration and holy extasie of delight, with the Spouse, *Cant. 6. 12. Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadib.*

Sudden and unexpected good is mostly most affecting; *As the shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land* is exceeding welcome. And who knows but God may, by hiding himself from thee, (while you are most busied to find his quickning Presence) break a great snare, and deliver thee from a temptation thou wert not well aware of? We are easily allured to sacrifice to our Nets, and glory in the Work of our own hands: to brag of our Duties and Endeavours, as

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if they had gotten us all these things ; whereas, we are not only, when we have done our all, unprofitable to God, but also impotent in profiting our selves. 'Tis a crowning Mercy for God to hide pride from Man, kill the pride of Duty, and put us upon giving him the All of the Glory of our Spiritual Successes.

Secondly, Take heed that thou bearest not false Witness against thy self ; a crime so much the greater as 'tis against nature : Yea, shall I say, Take heed thou dost not herein bear false Witness against God, by denying the Grace he hath really afforded thee. Let us not in our Zeal of hatred to our sinful Distempers, bury any sparks of God's Grace together with them in their just ruines. 'Tis the frequent fault of pious Persons (I had almost said a pious sin) to deny God's Goodness, with the acknowledgment of their own badness : as if denying God and our selves in this respect, were but the same thing. 'Tis hard for such trembling Hands to hold the Scales even. Humility it self will sometimes play the Tyrant, though it turn the fire al-ways against its own Breast and Bowels. Self-judging where it sins by extremity is commonly a good token of Grace and Sincerity. *Paul* did in nothing more express the

the greatness of his Sanctity, than in judging himself *less than the least of all Saints*, and the chiefest of Sinners, though in both there (at least) seems an excess.

Object. 2.

But if when we have done our Duty, we are unprofitable Servants; what can I expect, who have not herein done my Duty? I am conscious to my self of many neglects and shortness, in doing what was within my reach.

Answer.

First, The profitableness meant by that Text you allude unto, is never to be aim'd at by us, nor ever was within the Power of Men or Angels. *If thou be Righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand?* Job 35. 7. There can be no addition to absolute perfection. And moreover, we return him nothing but what we first received from him; so that if we take it in the largest sense, we must say as the Kingly Prophet, *Of thine own have we given unto thee.*

But secondly, Though thy Preparations are short, not only of what they should, and thou wouldst have them be, but also of what they might have bin, had thy Faithfulness answered thy Opportunities: This, though it be ground of Repentance,

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is no bar to thy Communion, nor makes thy hopes of the Benefits desperate. Failings of this kind have their atonement and expiation in the Blood of the Covenant, as well as any other. If we should make the unspottedness and perfection of any part of our Duty, the necessary ground of our acceptance with God, we should not only hereby usurp upon the peculiar efficacy of Jesus our Mediator, but also in all our addresses to God, lay a stumbling-block in the way of our Faith and Comforts. Therefore look chiefly to thy Sincerity, to thy Faithfulness in the main. If thou art heartily willing to be the Lord's, and aimest (in thy desires of Communion) that he may have thee more intirely his; Let not thy weakness and failings discourage thy Faith, the least sparks of which thy Lord will cherish, and to that end hath appointed this Ordinance.

Thirdly, Although after all thy strugglings to unfetter thy Heart from these hopeless Discouragements, thou find it yet in the same uncomfortable posture, let the Command of Christ, and sense of thy Duty, prevail with thee to attend the Ordinance. There is more than merely our Comfort designed by God, and should be so by us in this Ordinance, *scil.* a sanctifying

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fyng the Sovereignty and Lordship of Christ over us, by Obedience; an honouring a Crucified Jesus, by attesting to his Worthiness, and the glorious ends and efficacies of his death (in these respects shewing it forth); a profession of our adherence to him, and not being ashamed of him with respect to his Crucified posture, which was to the *Jews* a stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* foolishness; with many other ends not to be now expressed. It will become thee, not to be so selfish as to mind only thine own things, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. This would favour too much of a mercenary Spirit; whereas to be doing our Duty for Christ's sake, when we have small or no hope of comfort therein to our selves, is a mark of a holy Hero, one of the Lord's Worthies; and will in due time meet with a return from him, which will evidence that he highly values such a frame of Soul.

Fourthly, Though thou fear and tremble to come to the Ordinance in thy Fears, yet come. Thy Fears probably have no other ground than thy false suspicions, when thy languid hope hath the Authority of Christ for its strength and Warrant. Fears are uncomfortable, presumption is

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too often damnable. A broken Heart, a trembling and a contrite Spirit, are directly under the warm Beams of the Promise. *I dwell with him who is of a contrite Spirit, and trembles at my Word.* When thou comest in fears (arising not from a distrust of God's, but thine own unfaithfulness) he is most likely to say to thee, as to the Woman, *Mark 5. 33.* who came to Christ in the same posture of *fear and trembling, Go thy way in Peace.*

C H A P. XIX.

Of Meditation in the Action of the Sacrament.

I Shall now speak of the Frame and Deportment, which becomes us in the Communion; and wherein we may find its variety of Blessings. The first I shall consider is the Meditating Posture, its Necessity and Utility.

Meditation on Holy Things, as it rises into all within its reach, to find out such Objects which are most suitable to fix it self upon; so having found them, it dwells on them

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them for farther discovery and improvement ; not only piercing more and more into their secret Veins, but also impressing the things brought to light upon the Affections ; endeavouring such a Union to the Objects, as is no less than a transforming the Subject so employed into their likeness, according to the import of 2 Cor. 3. 18. *But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, &c.*

What is presented to us in the Lord's Supper, is no less than all the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel in a Scheme, or rather in their Root and Fountain-head ; and therefore calls for the most serious and intelligent Meditation, to infer the excellent admonitions so lively and in so small a Map couched, and to call forth the several Graces suitable thereunto in a due exercise. And as there is no Ordinance which doth more forcibly stir the holy Affections of the meanest Babe in Christ, so there is none doth more exercise the most profound reach of the most grown and learned in Christ's School. Its out-side is like the Wood of the Vine, of all others the most despicable, yet containeth in it a virtue bringing forth the most excellent Fruit, the Wine which (as saith *Jotham's Parable*) cheers both

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God and Man. And although God (to whom all things are always naked and bare) needs no meditation; yet we need it to press out this Vintage, and warm our Souls with the Spirits of this Ordinance. *While I was musing* (saith the Psalmist) *the Fire burned*, Psal. 39. 3. there is somewhat more to be done in this holy Action, than a meer looking on; an idle Spectator will prove but an ignorant and gainless Receiver. *Christ's offering up himself before us, calling for our offering up our selves to God through him; and our Compliance with his Call,* is a Theme capable of (I was going to say) infinite Enlargements; all which must be wrought out, and as it were, wire-drawn through holy Meditation.

The Work of the corporal Eye and Ear, is but small to that of the Faculties of the Soul. The sight of Bread and Wine broken and poured forth, with the words of Institution, *This is my Body broken for you; this is the Cup of the New-Testament in my Blood which is shed for you, and for the remission of all your sins:* Though they set forth lively a Crucified Christ, yet when these few things are seen and heard, their Improvement calls for all that is within us to be put on their highest and utmost Exercise. *Meditation* (saith Austin) *verily feeds our understanding,* under-

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derstanding our affections, and our affections raises our devotion. Lib.3. de Spir. & Anim. My Meditation of him shall be sweet, Psal. 104. 33. And why so? But because by Meditation he tasted the sweet of that Divine Object. Are we to reflect powerfully on the Love of God and Christ, our own sinfulness, (the occasion of this expression of that Love)? it must be done by Meditation. Would we draw forth the precious Promises, and Covenant of Pardon, favour of God, Glory to come? it must be by Meditation. Should we get bruised, broken, bleeding hearts, offered up to God from a holy Sympathy with our bleeding Saviour, but more from the sense of those Spots and Guilt we had contracted on our Souls by Sin, which nothing below this Blood, this Offering would do away? it must be by Meditation. Would we call up every Grace, as a Spikenard giveth forth their smell for the delightful entertainment of our Lord? it must be by Meditation. It was no impertinent Admonition which *Moses* gave to the People, when he took the Blood of the Peace-Offering, and sprinkled it on the People, and said, Behold the Blood of the Covenant. Yet we may suppose he intended the Soul's beholding its Meaning and Ends by Meditation, as the main end of fasting

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the Eyes of their Bodies on that Object. And 'tis certain, that although the Duties of this Ordinance are not done, nor its Benefits obtained by the meer efficacy of Thinking and Ratiocination, so neither are they effected by or on us as by a Charm; but God and our Redeemer will accompany with a Blessing our Industry in the holy improvement of our natural Faculties, directed by his Command, and moved by his gracious Promise.

C H A P. XX.

Of the Exercise of Faith, Repentance, Humility, Hope, Love, and Joy in the Communion.

AS in this Holy and Mystical Ordinance, are expressed the stupendous Ways of God, in conveying his matchless Love to Sinners, and the glorious Fruits and Privileges of the Saints the Effects of it: so it calls for the utmost exercise of every Grace, under the sense of what is herein exhibited. God doth in this Feast produce the best Fare that Heaven and Earth affords,

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affords, for the entertainment of his Children; and he expects we should not come to him in this address empty-handed. Now is the time to bring forth all those pleasant Fruits, which we have laid up in store for our beloved Jesus; and to have our Hearts in that dress, as may render our Communion most acceptable to our Bridegroom, our Redeemer and Lord; *While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*, Cant. 1. 12. The Communion (according to the import of the word) is a mutual participation of, and delight in the Person and Graces of Christ, and his espoused ones; the enjoyments of both in their suitable Exercise and Improvement, are the Furniture of this Table. I shall briefly touch on the exercise of the several Graces in their order, expressed in the Contents of this Chapter.

In this Exercise, Faith must be the Leader, or (shall I say also) the Companion, the Strength, the Soul of all the rest. Without the exercise of which, all the rest will be but as in a dead sleep. As we act Faith on Christ, so will our Repentance, Love, Joy, &c. gird up their Loins, and put forth their Strength in this Service. Therefore call on your Faith, as *Deborah* on her self, Judges 5. 12. *Awake, awake my Faith :
awake*

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awake, awake, utter a Song: Lift up thy self to behold, to be affected with, and shew forth the Praises of a Crucified Redeemer. Feed on the Fat, and eat the sweet of this Peace-Offering, this Feast of Love. Drink deep of this Fountain of Life, this Well of Salvation, till it become in thy own Soul a Well springing up unto Spiritual and Eternal Life, brim full, and running over.

And first of all Let Faith look on Christ as the Gift of the Father, that God the Father may not be left out of thy Creed, and respect in thy Exercise on so glorious a Subject, but may be a sharer in thy Love, Praises, and Admiration. It was he who sent Christ, anointed and sealed him for this blessed Work of our Redemption: It was he that gave his only Son to be an *Isaac* to us, a Child of Laughter, by taking the sowre away into his own Soul, that had put unpleasantness into all our Mercies, and Death at the bottom of our Cup. Let us fix the Eye of Faith on the Father as the Giver, the giver up of this great Gift for a Sin-Offering, and therein for a Peace-Offering. Jesus Christ as God is the begotten of the Father, as Man the Work of the Father his Creature; as in the Office of Redeemer, the Servant of the Father; as effect-

ing,

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ing Redemption, the Salvation of the *Father*.

Secondly, Let Faith on this Consideration look on the Father as reconciled; Christ being a Propitiation of his own providing; a Messenger and Performer of the Covenant of his own making; and on whom he laid the Iniquities of us all; yea, such a Propitiation that not only bare Testimony of himself, when giving up the Ghost, that his Work that his Father gave him to do was finished; but which also the Father's Testimony, by raising him from the dead, delivering him out of that last Bond, and exalting him to that Glory and Crown proposed as the Reward from the Father for finishing our Redemption; that herein signifying that he is well-pleased with Christ, and in him with all those that are interested in his Death.

Thirdly, Faith should from hence infer, not only Pardon, Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Glory and Happiness, to be the portion of every Believer in due time, which God hath precisely and expressly promised in his Word; but should also conclude the readiness of the Father, to shew all manner of kindness to Believing Sinners, seeing his Love was so great to them, as not to withhold from *them* his only Son. This was the wise Improvement.

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ment the Apostle's Faith made of this Gift of God, *Rom. 8. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* This Act of Faith would cure many a carnal perplexing care.

Fourthly, Let Faith be acted on a Crucified Christ, represented by the Bread broken, and the Wine poured forth; and that to confirm the Father's Love to be of that degree to us, as is sufficient to overcome all Difficulties; and that all the good of the Covenant is purchased by Christ at the hand of Justice it self, as well as of Mercy; a Crucified Christ being the full price of our Ransom from all Sin's Entanglements. *That he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, Rom. 3. 26.* And when Objections shall arise, either from the infinite Nature of God offended, or the many ways aggravated Offences thou art guilty of, let thy Faith in this tragical Act of the Lord Jesus, draw forth Proofs of the reasonableness of God's Satisfaction in this Offering, and his being pleased with thee in particular, to whom he hath given this Pledg. of his Favour, and Proof of his Reconciliation. Certainly there is enough in a Crucified Christ, to render Faith guided by the Promise to the highest pitch, to be a reasonable Faith.

Fifthly,

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Fifthly, Let Faith behold in this Spectacle, the Alſufficiency and Omnipotency of Chriſt; His Alſufficiency, as being God-Man, made by the Father an Offering for Sin, and thereby all the Treasures of both Natures united into one Perſon laid up in him, to be laid out on us; his Omnipotency in mastering Satan, the Wrath of Men, the Fears and Pains of Nature, yea, the fierce Diſpleaſure of the Almighty, and the Bonds of a violent Death; by which he could not be holden, when once the Divine Omnipotency ſtirred up it ſelf to ſhake off thoſe Fetters from his Humane Body. What cannot ſuch a Champion do in us, and for us, who hath triumphed over all theſe, and led Captivity captive?

Sixthly, Faith ſhould here feaſt the Soul with all thoſe Divine Perfections of Chriſt, which render him a Beauty ſurpaſſing all created Beings; and eſpecially that perfect love to us, that moved him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs Active and Paſſive for us; not neglecting thoſe Graces of Faith, Patience, Humility, Self-denial, which had ſuch a fiery and bloody Trial; all which together render his Complexion pure Red and White, complicated of a ſinleſs, guiltleſs, and matchleſs Paſſion; Innocency and ſuffer-

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sufferings meeting together in him in their perfection.

Seventhly, Let Faith consider this Ordinance as instituted and blessed by Christ, for the conveyance of the Wisdom, Love, Power, and the unsearchable Riches treasured up in him to the Souls of his Believing Ones, for their strength, comfort, and assurance; for the carrying them on cheerfully and stedfastly, in the ways of Grace, to their everlasting Rest. 'Tis Christ's Institution and Blessing that puts a power into an Ordinance as mighty and effectual as he pleases; and he is engaged not to leave his own Appointments without the concurrence of his effectual presence, where great unbelief and provocations tempt him not to turn the Cock, and seal up the Fountain from sending forth its usual Living-Waters. *When Christ was preaching, the Power of the Lord was present to heal them, Luke 5. 17.* God could have given the Holy Ghost to *Paul* without the Ministry of *Ananias*, but that being God's way, it must be brought about thereby. *In all places where I record my Name, I will come to thee and bless thee, Exod. 20. 24.* Christ's Institution and Blessing will make the hard Rock to pour forth Oil. The Power of God is so Almighty, as thereby to subdue all things

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things to himself, and make any means effectual to what ends he pleases.

Lastly, and above all, Let thy Faith be employed in receiving Christ; for that is the condition, without which all other Acts of Faith are unfruitful. *To as many as receive them, &c. John 1. 12.* What are we the better for believing all this good to be in a Crucified Christ, and also promised by God, unless we receive it? 'Tis receiving that enriches us. We should receive him in the Promise as tendred by the Word, but here (somewhat more significantly) we should take him as a Pledg and Earnest. And we must take heed that we receive Christ in the first place as God the Father hath tendred him, a Prince and a Saviour; and with him the Benefits that redound through him to Believers. He that is all for the Benefits, and nothing for the Person and Dominion of Christ, loses all.

To encourage our Faith to these Actings, let the following Considerations possess our Thoughts.

First, That Christ hath all his fulness for the enriching of his Members: his abundance is in order to his overflowing; his full fulness, to his filling fulness; *And of his fulness have we all received, &c. John*

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1. 16. *The fulness of him that fills all in all,*
Ephes. 1. 13.

Secondly, That the Sacrament is designed by Christ to encourage and actuate Faith. And indeed though God's Power be always present with the Institution, it will not work to our benefit, if Faith be absent or altogether idle. What boots it if the Well be nigh and plentiful, if we have no Pitcher to let down and draw? *He made him to suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oil out of the flinty Rock.* Thus (alluding) if we would have the Honey out of the Rock Christ, Faith must suck it. We must wring out the Waters of a full Cup.

Consider farther that in this Action Believers do as really receive Christ into their Souls, as they receive the Bread and Wine into their Bodies. Faith lifting up the everlasting Doors, the King of Glory comes in. Faith receiving Sacramental Tenders, calls Christ, and all that is his, the Soul's Propriety; his Death, Resurrection, Life, yea, Heaven purchased by him: and this is indeed the Communion of the Blood of Christ. Christ in the Sacrament presents himself to us, and bids us (as *Thomas*) put the hands of Faith into his Wounds, and thereby be confirmed. The Blood of Christ (in this Ordinance to be applyed) is a Sanctifying

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Justifying Blood. *Heb. 13. 12.* makes us to be consecrated and separated to God ; a mortifying Blood to Sin and Lust, *Rom. 2. 3.* A softning Blood, that turns a Heart of Adamant into a Heart of Flesh, tender and sensible of Spiritual Good and Evil, *Zech. 12. 10.* A quickning Blood, that hath Life and Strength in it, the Life-Blood of Christ is Life and Strength to a Believer. *Heb. 13. 20, 21.* Justifying Blood, that renders Believers just in the sight of God ; Cordial Blood. What was killing Blood to Christ as poured out, is cheering Wine to us taken in by Faith. Healing Blood to a broken Heart and wounded Conscience ; *with his stripes we are healed.* No Wounds so deadly, but the Death of Christ, rightly applied, will cure.

CH A P.

C H A P. XXI.

*Of Meditation, Repentance, and Faith
at the Sacrament.*

BEing come to the Lord's Table; it follows to be considered, what behaviour is there required. Without a care of this, all former Preparation is lost as to the benefit of this Ordinance. There are some Duties in which the whole Congregation join together, in which we must free our selves from all looseness and evagation of Spirit; but these I intend not to insist on. There are some special Duties which every one is obliged privately to perform. In general, they are *an offering up our selves to God in an holy and spiritual Disposition.*

And first by Meditation. This lays that to the Heart which must bruise and heal it; kill Sin, and quicken our Graces and Comforts. *My Meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.* Consider what is set before thee in Sacramental Elements, Actions and Promises. Behold what a Feast God hath prepared for thee, *A Feast of fat Things, a Feast of Wine on the Lees; a Feast of fat Things full of Marrow, of Wine on the Lees well refined, to feed and fat-*

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fatten our lean Souls. Here we see Christ Crucified before our eyes, hanging and bleeding on the Cross, pressed and crushed under the heavy pressure of his Father's infinite Wrath. Behold now the Lamb of God shedding his precious Blood, to take away thy Sins: That Goat who is both the slain and the scape-Goat, bearing thy Sins by Suffering, and also carrying them away into the Land of Eternal Forgetfulness.

Let all the Sorrows of Christ's Passion be the Object of thy Thoughts, all the Sorrows which were the Effects of the Wrath, both of *God and Men*. The darkness that covered the face of the Earth at that time, was but a *shadow* of that *blackness* of darkness that was upon his Soul, when he stood in our stead, undertaking for us; and without which, we in our own Persons must have suffered the blackness of darkness for ever. How many were the pains of his Body by the inhumane usage of his barbarous Enemies? What the bitterness of his Soul under all the Reproaches, Contempts, and Abuses cast upon him, as though he were the very Sink to receive their Sords and Filth. Earth and Hell conspired to make his Misery matchless; yet all this was not enough, his dear Father, whom he never displeased, adds
more

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sorrows and greater to the rest, by withdrawing his Countenance. O his frowns were they that gave the death-blow to his Soul, and *broke his Heart*. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* was his dying words, expressing the *Paroxysm* of his Passion.

Behold here as in a Glass the greatness of Sin. Surely Sin must be another thing than Men commonly esteem it. Let out your Hearts especially in the admiration of that unmatched Love and Goodness expressed from God to thee in the Work of Redemption. Labour to comprehend its length, breadth, height, and depth, *And to know the Love of Christ which passeth knowledge*. What Heart is able to do this sufficiently? *What is Man* (O Lord) *that thou shouldst magnifie him, and set thine Heart upon him?* How should this fire our Hearts with love to God and Christ, and put us into the same posture with *David*? *Psal. 39. 3. My Heart was hot within me; whilst I was musing the Fire burned*. There is not a Passage in all Christ's Sufferings, but may set forth his Love to thee, and kindle thine to him. *We will remember thy Love more than Wine*. This is a Sacrament of Remembrance, yet not of a bare cogitation, but of such a Remembrance as is accompanied with

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with suitable Impressions and Effects; and they are these which follow.

First, *A Godly sorrow for Sin, especially for our own.* What pierced Christ should pierce us; considering that our Sins were more eminently the Cause, than the *Jews*, or *Pilate*, or the *Souldiers*; yea more the *Traitors* than *Judas*. The Passover was to be eaten with bitter Herbs. That Passion expressed *Zech. 12. 10.* is somewhat short of what is called for in this Ordinance. *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, and be in bitterness for him, as one that mourns for his only Son, as one that is in bitterness for his First-born.* And this should be not only with a compassionate, but also a practical Sorrow. And is there not a Cause, when our Sins were not only the Root of the Thorns and Cross that wounded and kil'd our Redeemer, but also put an inexpressible Poison and Venom into them? It was we who did eat the sowre Grapes that set his Teeth on edge; we that stole the forbidden Fruit, and he that made the Satisfaction.

Thus should our Eyes affect our Hearts. The Sacrament of the Supper should be turned into a Baptism of Tears. Alas, for the hardness of our Hearts! That we can think of our Lord, and behold him all in
gore

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gore Blood for our sins; not only his five Wounds streaming out Blood, but all the Pores of his Body as one Sluce, and yet our Hearts not rent and melt, and our Eyes become a Fountain. Call for mourning Hearts, if they are deaf to you, turn Commands into Complaints. Ah our rocky Hearts, harder than the nether Mill-stone! If this won't do, turn Complaints into Prayer; Lord, smite these Hearts of ours, that they may open to Thee, and their Duty.

The second is, *A solemn renewing of our Vows and Covenant with God*; to renounce all our Lusts and Vanities, to walk more close and watchfully. The Sacrament is of the quality of a binding Oath, the name came from such a practice among the *Latins*. In the hour wherein thou receivest it, avouch the Lord to be thy God, and that thou wilt walk in his Ways. We have no reason to think that God will avouch us for his People, unless we bind ourselves to take him for our God. Covenants are mutual, if either Party consent not, there can be no Covenant.

Thirdly, *The Exercise of Faith*. This is the chief Work of the Sacrament. A Christ offered calls for nothing more than a receiving Christ. In order to this we are to consider

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der, that Christ is an All-sufficient Fulness. *It pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell.* What-ever is required in a Mediator, is in him to the full. He hath fulness of Merit, of Grace, of the Spirit to convey these and their Advantages to Believers. *He hath the seven Spirits of God,* Rev. 3. 1. And all these are his Treasures, stored up in him to be laid out upon us. Christ is filled with Riches and Treasures to this very end; 'tis a Fulness to overflow, *Full of Grace and Truth, and of his Fulness have we all received, &c.* John 1. 14. There is enough in him to fill all the empty hungry Souls in the World. And his Fulness is such, that it abates nothing by all the supplys it affords to all the Saints in Heaven and Earth. This Ordinance is by him appointed for a conveyance of this Fulness. He hath sanctified it to this Use. He hath blessed it to convey to us all the Blessings that grew on his Cross. And what will not this Ordinance effect to a Believer, when it comes as Christ's Plenipotentiary with a full Commission from him. Though Christ can, yet he doth not ordinarily convey his Favours and Benefits but by the Golden Pipes of his Ordinances; in these the Lord anoints his People with fresh Oil.

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The way to make this Ordinance effectual, is by setting Faith on Work. Christ is a full and deep Well of Life; but if Faith act not, the Bucket is not let down. The Power of Faith takes hold on, and lies open to the gracious Power of God in this Ordinance. Faith turns the Cock, and makes the Waters of Life run into our Vessels freely. Thus disposed we may with joy draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation. Yea, this Rock Christ will pour forth to us Rivers of Oil. 'Tis said of *Israel*, Deut. 32. 13. *He made him suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oil out of the flinty Rock.* If Faith suck not, the Rock Christ will yield nothing. *That ye may suck and be satisfied with the Breasts of her Consolation*, Isa. 66. 11. Faith thus acting, will draw these full Breasts to satisfaction. When therefore we are come to this Table, let us set all the Powers of Faith on Work.

Question.

But how and in what manner is Faith to be actuated in this Ordinance?

Answer.

First, *On Sacramental Offers.* Let Faith as verily receive and apply Christ and all his Benefits, as Christ offers them. *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.* We should not give Christ

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Christ a narrow, but an abundant entrance, suitable to the Glory of his Person, and the Train of Attendants and Blessings he brings along with him.

Secondly, *On Sacramental Promises.* In Taking, and Eating, and Drinking the Body and Blood of Christ by Faith, Christ doth promise that Reconciliation, Pardon, Quickning, which is the Virtue and Benefit of his Death. Let Faith now believe that the Body of Christ is given, and the Blood of Christ shed for thee in particular, who receivest this Ordinance by Christ's Command. Let such an one say, *Lord, I believe*, and cheerfully and gladly apply to mine own Soul, what thou hast tendred and bestowed on thy People in a Crucified Christ. Say boldly, Christ is mine, Pardon is mine, God is mine, and Heaven is mine.

Thirdly, *On Sacramental Representations.* The Death of Christ, or Christ as Crucified, is there represented to thee. The broken Bread represents, a bruised broken Jesus, fitted as Food for thy Soul: The Wine poured out, a bleeding Jesus, a Christ overcoming, by the utmost sufferings, all that stands in the way of thy Salvation. It represents not a lifeless, but a powerful Blood; not a dumb, but an interceding

crying Blood, that cries louder to God for Mercy, and Peace for thy Soul, than ever the Blood of *Abel* cried for vengeance on his cruel unbrotherly Murderer. Faith should put its hands into the Wounds of Christ, yea suck the Blood of those Wounds with a holy greediness, as the Balm and Wine of Healing and Refreshment to thee, and as mortal Poison to thy Sins and Lusts.

Faith should anatomize a Crucified Christ, and be prying into every Vein of strength and comfort that is wrapt up in him as such ; reading a Lecture to thy self hereby of the Powers and Uses of the Blood of Christ, as a Sanctifying, Purging, Cleansing, Mortifying, Mollifying, Strengthening, Cheering, Quickning Blood ; a Blood that opens the Prison Doors to set thee free, and opens the Wards of the Love and Heart of God ; yea, of all the Treasures that Heaven consists of. Now according to these Qualities of the Blood of Christ, apply them to thy self and proper Objects ; a cleansing Blood to a polluted Heart and Life, his Blood as softning to a hard Heart, as mortifying to strong Lusts, as quickning to weak Graces, &c.

Let Faith, (when Conscience reads the Indictment of thy Sin, and pleads Guilty, pur-

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pursuing thy Soul to a Sentence of Death) flee to Christ, to that munition of Rocks, as thy City of Refuge, in this or such-like Pleas: True indeed, I have transgressed, and that beyond the accusation of my Conscience, which hath not bin so diligent and exact a Recorder of my sinful Conversation, but it hath let slip many a passage of aggravated Offences, besides lesser Faults: but my Lord Jesus the Eternal Son of God hath taken the Sentence, and strokes due to me, into his own Body and Soul; and by his Wounds I am healed. My Conscience; that in answer to the Law indicted me for a damned Sinner, in answer to the Gospel, clears me as a justified Person, and a beloved Child. I need not fear to look Sin and Wrath in the Face, while my Lord as Crucified stands by, saying, Be of good cheer, he is near that justifieth thee; Who shall condemn thee? Hath Sin dishonoured God, and wounded thy Soul? Behold my Head crowned with smarting Contempt, my Hands and Feet wounded with Nails, my Face of Divine Glory spit on, my Heart my Soul melted with sorrow. Here is Dishonour for Dishonour, Wounds for Wounds, Death for Death. Here is all that the Law would have inflicted on thee, apparent in their Wounds and Dishonour

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nour on my Body, and the Sorrow of my Soul. O thou Dove, make thy Nest in the sides of these Rocks; let the Faith of these things fill thy Heart with a Holy Security, and strong Consolation.

Add to these high and holy Thanks-givings to the Lord, from an Heart affected and enlarged with the sense of Goodness. As he hath filled thy Soul with Food, let it be also filled with Gladness in him the Giver. What should now follow but, *My Soul shall praise thee with joyful Lips*? When Men are filled with Wine, they Sing, they Shout. There may be excess in that, but not in having such holy Effects of this Wine, this Feast. This Duty is intimated by the Hymn Christ and his Disciples sang together at the end of the Supper. And 'tis observable, that the *Psalms* sung by *Israel* at the Passover, viz. 113, and the five following, (one of which 'tis concluded Christ sang at the Supper) are called the *Great Hallelujah*. This they began to sing after the Cup of Wine, calling it *the Cup of the Hymn, or of Praise*.

Lastly, We should at this time be in the exercise of holy Love. Looking on our Fellow-Members communicating with us, we should cleave to them in one Spirit as Members of the same Body with them.

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1 Cor. 10. 17. *We drink* (saith the Apostle) *into one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Neither must we forget now the Exercise of Mercy and Compassion to the Members of Christ, who are poor in this World. To practice this, is to begin betimè to pay our Vows, and make some proof that we understand and mean what we profess, in, and at partaking of the Lord's Supper.

C H A P. XXII.

Of such Duties as must follow Receiving.

THere ought to be a special care of Duties incumbent on us after, as well as before, or in Receiving; the neglect of this may mar all. Unsuitable Actions may destroy Meat in the Digestion, and turn it into Diseases, though it were well prepared, and eaten with a good Appetite; but especially after Physick taken, the Body should be well ordered, both in respect of Diet and Exercise, but especially that we take not sudden cold. And indeed this Feast is Medicinal, its very Food is Physick.

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Administred for our recovery to that Spiritual Healthfulness, which the Diseases of Sin had destroyed. This Care stands in two things.

First, *In Examination* ; How God hath dealt with a Communicant ? What welcome, what Friendship and Communion with Christ he hath found ? What quickning and comforting Virtue Christ hath let into his Soul ? If a Man have found no Answer from Heaven, but that his Heart was dead and drooping, then first let him suspect himself that he was not well prepared, or attended not his Duty in the Ordinance. And having found out the hinderances, judg thy self, and be seriously humbled for them. If thou dost thus, 'tis a sign thou hast not lost all thy labour, for God hath given thee a sensible and tender Heart, though he hath not filled it with Joy and Comfort.

Secondly, Endeavour by *after-pains* in Prayer to quicken that Duty to an Efficacy. Ordinances have their After-Births, they do not always work in the Reception. That Food which is received with little relish, or sensible Spirits, may digest to an abundance of strength and healthfulness of Soul. 'Tis said of *Saul*, that *when he turned his back from Samuel, God gave him another*
Heart,

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Heart, 1 Sam. 10. 9. The Spirit came not upon him *in*, but *after* anointing. It were ill with many a poor Soul if they never had found other benefit by this Ordinance than in the Action it self. 'Tis a fault in too many to leave all their Devotion behind them when they come from the Ordinance, and 'tis not without fault to neglect to recover afterward that which they obtained not before.

But if upon search we find that we have not received without Fruit, then bless the Lord for his unspeakable Mercy with all thy Soul. Be careful and watchful to keep up that holy Frame. Say to thy self, *It is good for me to be here*, as the Disciples when they beheld the Glory of Christ in the Mount. Endeavour to keep up that height of Gracious Affections, Holy Relishes, and Resolutions wrought in you at the Ordinance. When *David* saw the Hearts of the People sweetly enlarged, he prays, *O Lord keep this for ever in the Imagination of the thought of the heart of thy People for ever, and prepare their heart unto thee, 1 Chron. 29. 18.* When at *Hezekiah's* Passover they found the Hearts of the People warmed and raised, they took counsel, and kept other seven days with gladness.

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And this by way of Proportion teaches us to keep alive as long as may be this holy Fire, when kindled by the presence of God with us at his Ordinance. 'Tis a gross, hurtful, and ungrateful miscarriage, for Men to fall to earthly Conference at the very threshold of such Duties, quenching the Spirit, and taking cold to a Soul-hardning, as Iron heated red-hot by putting into the Water. Verily this is a just Provocation to the Lord to withhold such slighted, and unprized Mercies; 'tis a Token of a very damp and earthly Heart, when a holy Fire on the over-night, shall leave neither spark nor warmth to the next Morning.

The last thing to be done, is to express the Power and Efficacy of this Ordinance, by keeping our Vows and Covenants we made to and with the Lord. Our Hearts are very treacherous, fickle, and slippery; and we have need to look narrowly to them. Satan and Corruption are most longing to break loose, when bound with new Cords. The Devil knows, that after such Experiences, and devotedness to God, our withdrawings will be more sinful, discouraging, and incurable. *Elijah* after he was fed by God, went in the strength of that Food forty Days and forty Nights. It were well if we could make such an
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improvement of the Lord's-Table refreshments.

When Wisdom had slain her Beasts, mingled her Wine, and furnished her Table; *Prov. 9. 5, 6. Come (saith she) eat of my Bread and drink of the drink which I have mingled.* But what doth she require after this? *Forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of Understanding.* This is the thing which God looks for at our hands. *When we go from the Lord's Table, (saith Chrysostom) let us (revolving in our minds the Love there expressed to us from the Lord) as Lions, breath out Fire, and become terrible to the very Devil.* ad Pop. Hom. Let us shew, by mortified Lusts, and more powerful Obedience, the good use we have made of this Provision. O how soon are Mens Vows forgotten, and they returned to their old Channel? It was stupendous Impudence of the Harlot, *Prov. 7. 14, 18.* to play the Whore the same day she had bin at the Altar; to sacrifice to the Devil so soon after she had bin Sacrificing to God. A common thing with Popish Priests to rise from the Harlots Bed to consecrate the Sacrament; and to remove again from that to the Harlots Bed. What is this but to take *poison* after *Physick*? O consider the Vows of God that are upon you,

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you, and that they are strong and binding seven Years after, as at the same moment wherein they were made. As the Baptismal Vow, so that of the Supper binds to the day of our Death.

For the farther impressing of this, consider, that without persevering Obedience the Lord esteems such services none at all; yea, he esteems it no less than Treason, *But they like Men have transgressed my Covenant, there have they dealt treacherously against me,* Hof 6.7. In that wherein they suppose they had done God great Service, in that they most treacherously abused him. And what is more provoking than Treachery? Treachery is a Sin none are capable of but Persons covenanting.

Secondly, Consider that in neglecting a holy Walking with God after this Ordinance, we pollute the Name of God, and become guilty of Spiritual Perjury; a Sin abhorred among Men in civil things, and no less but much more sinful in Spiritual things, and provoking to God: the Matter and the Parties of the Covenant, being incomparably more considerable. In the Lord's Supper we Covenant to be his, in Faith, Obedience, and Dependance, wilfully to neglect all or any of these, is a black Crime after such Engagements. *For a Man*

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to Vow, and not to keep his Vow, what is it but Perjury, (saith Bernard) ? How severely did God threaten Zedekiah for breaking his Covenant with the King of Babylon, a Heathen and Oppressor ? Shall he escape that doth such things ? or shall he break the Covenant and be delivered ? God hath sworn that he will be revenged on such as are forsworn : Wo then to that Man who breaks his Covenant with God, The Lord will not be mocked, and it is an unnatural Sin for us to mock and abuse our selves in a matter of such moment. Thus we have in faithfulness opened to you your Duty, before, in, and after this precious Ordinance ; and they that walk according to this Rule, Peace shall be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God, Gal. 6. 6.



A Dialogue between a *Minister* and a private *Christian*, touching the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, and the due Administration and Reception of it: Wherein the Nature of that Sacrament is largely opened, and many weighty Questions relating thereunto resolved.

Christian.

S*IR, I make bold to give you the trouble of a Visit, to express my due Respects to you as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and whose Ministry I hope the Lord hath blessed to me in particular in some measure.*

Minister. My good Friend, you are always welcome to me; and so much the more, as you bring the good tidings of the success of my Labours in the Service of my Lord and Master, for the good of your precious Soul.

Ch. I am very thankful to God, and you (*his faithful Minister*) for that good I have received by your Labours, in order to a better Life; which, with the freedom you now give me, encourages me humbly to entreat your help, and to resolve me of some Doubts and Scruples about the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Min. With all my heart! If the Lord hath bestowed.

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stowed any Talent on me, it is but a trust to be laid out for his Glory, and the welfare of Souls; therefore tell me what you would be resolved of, and I will freely assist you, and consider all your Doubts as touching the Ordinance it self, in the Institution, Nature, Administration, and Ends of it; and the Qualifications of those who are to communicate by Christ's appointment. Will the discussion of these Particulars (think you) reach your Scruples?

Ch. Sir, I suppose there is little to be said about that Great Ordinance, but what may be handled under one or other of these Heads; all of which I should be glad to be rightly informed in: But to deal plainly with you, That which most agitates and troubles my Thoughts, is, Whether it be my Priviledge & Duty, to Communicate or Receive that blessed and holy Seal? and if so, how I may do it to the Glory of God, and mine own edification and comfort?

Min. This was it I expected, and I find it a common case with those who fear the Lord, and tremble at his Presence in so Holy an Administration. I shall therefore endeavour in the first place, to disburden you of these Difficulties.

Ch. Sir, I shall receive your Instructions with all thankfulness; and if my Heart deceive me not, I shall rejoice in the Truth, though it rebuke and condemn me: much more if it shall speak comfortably, and encourage me to that which my Soul longeth for.

Min. Did you ever partake of the Lord's Supper?

Ch. I know not well how to reply to this Question. I confess I have long since bin at the Communion, and did there as I saw others do: And what I did, was by example of those of my Years, (being of the Age of sixteen) and out of the pride of my Heart; while yet I neither understood, nor considered.

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sidered what I did, nor to what end.

Min. This was indeed your Sin, and calls for your Repentance: Not because you entred on that Action at that Age, but because you did it with so weak a Head, and a worse Heart.

Ch. O Sir, this sin hath stuck so close to my Conscience, that I often fear, yea conclude, that such an abuse of my Redeemer's Body and Blood, in that sacred Ordinance, will not lightly, if ever, be forgiven me; and those, Sir, (when they come into my mind) are as Messengers of Death to my Soul, 1 Cor. 11. 27, 28, 29. Mal. 1. 8.

Min. But you must take heed of running out of one Sin into another: For although all Sin makes work for Repentance, and deserves condemnation eternal, yet no Sins for nature, or number (except that against the Holy Ghost) are greater than can, or shall be forgiven to the truly humbled, believing, and ~~im~~penitent.

Ch. I am afraid I have sinned at as high a rate as is possible; for what sin is greater, than to sin against the Remedy, and trample underfoot the Blood of the Covenant, esteeming it a common thing?

Min. If you consider those Texts you alleadge against your self, you will find it far otherwise; Jesus Christ tells us, *Mat. 12. 31, 32.* That all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, yea, speaking against the Son of Man. The Lord afflicted the Corinthians for that very Sin, that they might not be condemned with the World, v. 30, 31, 32. that is, that they might be brought to a sight and sense of their Sin, and Gospel Repentance; and all Sin requires this in order to Forgiveness. And for that Text *Mal. 1. 8.* the Prophet gives the same counsel which I now give to you; which implies the Grace of God sufficient, and ready to pardon that proph-
nation:

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Ch. Blessed be God that I now understand that my Sin is not unpardonable, and that I have not, by former abuses, made my self utterly hopeleſs of admillion to the Lord's Table, and the Blessings to be enjoyed in a more due frame of Spirit in that holy Ordinance. And now, Sir, I beg of you to inform me what I ought to be, that I may be fit and worthy for that Holy Communion.

Min. I pray consider well, That there is no proper worthineſs, but what we have in Jesus Christ, so far as Worthineſs is Merit or Desert: And for that worthineſs which we are to contrive by fitness, or meetneſs, we must take it two ways: First, For such as renders us every way what such ought to be that sit down at the Lord's Table. And the nearer we come to this, the better; but the best come short of this perfect fitness, *Iſa.* 64.¹⁶. *Phil.* 13. 9. Secondly, Such a fitness as answers to the necessary Conditions of this Action, and without which it is our sin to adventure upon it.

Ch. I confess I stood in great need of this Information, for I was of Opinion, that if I wanted any Qualification which was my Duty, it was a Bar to my right to Communion: But seeing it is otherwise, I intreat you to inform me if I have a right to this Ordinance, after which my Soul doth so much hunger?

Min. This is beyond my power, it belongs mostly to your own Conscience, which is or may be privy to the secrets of your Soul, which are out of my reach; and therefore we are bid to examine our selves, and to prove our own selves, *2 Cor.* 13. 5. *1 Cor.* 11. 28.

Ch. I know it is God's peculiar to know the Heart, and search into those secrets of it, that may be hidden from my own Conscience, *1 Joh.* 3. 20. But so far as upon diligent observation, I am acquainted with my self, I shall, as in the sight of
Christ

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Christ (whose Minister you are) deal openly and plainly; and then I doubt not but your ministerial Abilities, and Ingenuity, may afford me a true determination.

Min. Then I shall direct my Enquiries to two things; first, Of your Qualifications, as a sincere Christian in general; and secondly, as a Christian meet to partake of the Lord's Supper, for they are distinct, and sometimes separated.

Ch. I pray, Sir, then inform me how I may know if I am a sincere Christian?

Min. By those Characters which the Word of God gives to all true Believers, and which none but Believers have.

Ch. What are they?

Min. Among others, such a knowledge of God in Christ, as works by Love to an earnest study of the Will of God, and a sincere endeavour to live in the Faith, knowledge and practice of it, *John 17. 3. Gal. 5. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 2.*

Ch. I cannot commend the measure of my Knowledge; yet, by the Grace of the Lord shewed to me, and upon me, I dare say, That these Conceptions I have of God in Christ, have so far prevailed upon me, that to live in the Knowledge, Love, and Enjoyments of him; and to have my All devoted to his Will, and Praise, is all the Heaven I desire in this World, and a great part of that which I hope for in the World to come.

Min. Blessed be God for this unspeakable Grace! you have thus far made a good Confession, and I hope in Truth. But I pray tell me, what change for the better have these good Dispositions wrought in your inward and outward Motions and Actions?

Ch. I find that my delight is in the Word of God read and preached, and I meditate thereon, that I might grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The thoughts of God are many and precious

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precious to me. I hate not only vile, but vain thoughts. My Heart rises against Sin in its first motions. I endeavour to avoid all occasions of sin, that I may not be ensnared my self; and all appearances of evil, that I may not grieve nor ensnare others. I should rejoice to have every Imagination subjected to the Laws of Christ. I am not (out of choice and delight) a Companion of vain Persons, open Enemies to Godliness. My Love is to the Godly for godliness-sake, and I love them so well, that I can rejoice to part with my Substance for their Service; and had much rather suffer reproach and affliction with God's People, than to live in the confluence of worldly greatness, and the countenance of Men ungracious, how great soever. The Lord hath given me a Bridle to my Tongue; it doth not walk through the Earth, and without bounds as heretofore. I hate lying Lips, obscene and frothy Discourses. Swearing, Cursing, and all dishonourable Speeches against God, Godliness, wound my Ears, and pierce my Soul. I make Conscience of taking up a slander against my Neighbour. I endeavour to be just to all, and to do good proportionable to my ability. My Family I instruct in the Fear of the Lord, and as I am frequent in self-examination, and private addresses to God: so I make Conscience of Family-Worship, and to walk in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless, Psal. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 2. Psal. 139. 17. Psal. 119. 113. Rom. 7 lat. end. Psal. 1. 1. 2 Cor. 10 5. Psal 119. 63. Heb. 11. 25, 26. 1 John 2. 10. 1 John 4, 7. Jam. 1. 26. Psal. 26 4. Mic. 6. 8. Luk. 1. 6.

Min. These are great Tokens for good. And if these be the Effects and Fruits of your Faith, it is not a dead Faith. But do you think all this will justify you in the sight of God?

Ch. God forbid! I know no Justification merited but by the Blood of Jesus. It is his Righteousness,

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niss, and his only, that I dare make mention of before God, for my pardon and readmission into his favour. If the Lord do enable me to bring forth any Fruit meet for a Gospel Faith, Repentance, and Love: these I bless God for, as a part of my duty and happiness, and desire to look on them as proofs of Faith, (if they are worthy to be such) but no farther. Job 9. 31. Phil. 3. 8, 9. Job 25. 4. Gal. 2. 16. James 2. 21, to the 25. Psal. 71. 16. Isa. 64. 6. Isa. 45. 24.

Min. It is dangerous to our own Souls, as well as derogatory to Christ, to put our Righteousness in the room of his. If we lean on our Righteousness in the room of his. If we lean on our own Righteousness for Justification, Merit, Satisfaction, it will be a rotten prop, moulder to Ashes, and make that which shines, and is a sweet odour in its place, to become an abomination in the sight of the Lord. But let me ask you a little further; Do you find what you professed to be the Fruit of your Faith and Love, to be constantly on every frame and tenour, without slips and haltings?

Ch. Ah Sir, I would I could say so; but it is far otherwise: for sometimes my relish of God's Word is very insipid, and its Authority not so sensibly powerful. My Thoughts are polluted, my Words unsavory, without edification; my Actions not adorning the Doctrine of God my Saviour, but such as I may fear may prove a grief and snare to others. I am sometimes so unready to any thing that is good, as if I were but a dead Man, and my Religion had no Life nor Soul in it.

Min. When you thus fail in your Duty, or fall into sin, What think you of your self and ways? how are you affected?

Ch. Truly Sir, when I am in this bad frame; I am as one out of my Element, my Joys are gone, my Soul out of joint: But when I am a little awakened,

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ned, my Soul is melted with grief for such miscarriages ; I go to God with a great deal of fear and shame, yet beg that he would renew a right Spirit within me.

Min. You have expressed enough to evidence the sincerity of your Obedience ; and if your own Conscience confirm what you have said, I do not fear to pronounce you a true Believer, and a sincere Convert : Only give me leave to demand one thing more touching your Faith in Jesus Christ the Mediator ; without a due respect to whom, our Faith, and good Affections, will not be worthy the Name of Evangelical and Saving.

Ch. *I must crave your charity to put the best construction on my defective and broken Expressions in this Point. I desire to acknowledge and embrace the Lord Jesus as he is declared and rendred in the Gospel. To believe all his Doctrines as my Teacher and Guide ; to trust in, and depend upon him as the High Priest of our Profession, making atonement by his Sacrifice and Intercession. And to submit to his Government as Lord and King of his Church.*

Min. These are great things, and contain the substance of saving Faith. But how did you come by this frame and disposition ? was it natural to you, or the result of the improvement of natural Powers ?

Ch. *God forbid I should ascribe that to Nature, which is due to Divine Grace : If I am in any measure sanctified, it is by the Grace of God that I am what I am. I confess it not only as an Article of my Faith, but as that which I have found by woful Experience, that I am by nature alive to Sin and Vanity, but dead unto God, and all true Goodness : That I am Darkness, Folly is bound up in my Heart, I am very enmity to God, altogether impotent to will or to do what is pleasing to God ; but most of all contrary to the way of Salvation proposed*

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sed in the Gospel. 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Eph. 2. 1. Ephes. 5. 8. Job 11. 12. Rom 8. 7, 8.

Min. Do you desire and endeavour to persevere in the Faith, and practice you have expressed to your lives end?

Ch. *There is nothing I more fear than a back-sliding Heart from the Lord; every degree of which I desire to watch and pray against.*

Min. How do you expect to hold out in the Faith and Obedience of the Gospel, considering the many Corruptions and Temptations we have to grapple with, and the sad falls of many who have seemed to be Pillars in the House of God?

Ch. *My trust and dependance is not on my self, I look to the Rock that is higher than I, to him who hath promised, that where a good Work is begun, he will perfect it to the Day of Christ. I look to the Lord Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my Faith. I beg his Holy Spirit to instruct, guide, assist, and comfort me. And I desire, and purpose (by the grace of God) to expect these Aids in a constant and universal attendance upon God in his Ordinances, with an honest, humble, and believing Heart.* Psal. 61. 2. Phil. 1. 6. Heb. 12. 2. Isa. 64. 5.

Min. I shall not at this time discourse you farther upon the Point of Saving Grace. I pray God these things may abide and increase in your Soul; and that you may have a full assurance of his Love which he hath evidenced in you, and to you, by so many Tokens for good.

Ch. *Sir, I thank you for your pains and patience with me thus far; and I desire to treasure up the wholesome and comfortable Advice I have received from you, that I may, in the sense of the Love of God to my Soul, walk worthy of his Grace. And, Sir, I now entreat a short word, to inform me, If I be fit to feed on Jesus Christ at his Table, and receive that blessed Seal of my Redeemer's Love?*

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Min. I remember I told you, That a Man may be a sincere Believer, and yet not fit to partake of Christ in this Ordinance. And my special Reason is, Because a Man may believe to Salvation, and yet be so ignorant of this Mystery, as not to be able to make (in any measure) a due application of it to his own Soul.

Ch. *I pray tell me what is necessary to fit a true Believer for it?*

Min. First, He must understand that the Elements and Matter of this Ordinance are not common Bread and Wine after consecration, but separated to Holy Use, and therefore to be received with a holy Understanding and Fear.

Ch. *This I am convinced of by that Scripture, 1 Cor. II. where the Corinthians are blamed for their Ignorance and Irreverence.*

Min. But farther, you are to consider those Elements so Blessed, and set apart as Christ hath appointed, to be the representation of a Crucified Redeemer, and to be received with Love, as a Remembrance of his Death, and with Faith, as the Seal of the Promise, and God's means to convey to the Soul the Benefits of Christ Crucified.

Ch. *O, Sir, these are the Considerations that have set so great an edge on my desire to come to the Lord's Table, that I may feast my Eyes on that Object so lovely, because so full of Love; and that the sight of my Eye may render my Heart more deeply affected to my dear Redeemer, and that I may meet with Christ in all the ways of his Appointments.*

Min. Another thing I must tell you, is, That the Habits of Grace (though they are the Wedding Garment) must be put into special Exercise: And to this end, among others, there ought to be Self-Examination, that we may know our Wants and Defects, and come to Christ for a supply of Grace; and be so in the Acts of Faith, Love, Repentance, and

and all other Graces, that Jesus Christ may delight in us, and we in him, and there may be a mutual and joyful renewing of Covenant, and fresh Obligations of Love and Obedience on our part; and I take this to be the Wedding Garment put on, which is so necessary.

Chr. I know that it cannot be expected, that there should be the exercise of Grace where the Habits are not, any more than there can be Action without Life: But I have heard that this Ordinance is a quickning, cherishing, comforting Ordinance; and upon these Accounts I very much need and desire it.

Min. You say very true; and if ever the Saints have found themselves sick and overcome with Love, strong in Faith, resolved for Obedience, humble and vile in their own Eyes, in a passionate hatred of all Sin, and in a longing after Christ's glorious Appearance and Coming, it hath bin in the due use of this Holy Communion.

Ch. If these be the necessities to render a Person obliged in point of Duty, and meetness to come to the Lord's Supper; I hope, (though with fear and trembling) that you will admit me, and join your Prayers with mine, that I may so come as to meet with him whom my Soul loveth.

Min. As I am a Steward of the Mysteries of God, I ought to be faithful in the dispensing of them, and in faithfulness I am obliged to give the Sacramental Bread of Life, and Cup of Consolation to Christ's Children, who hunger and thirst after him, his Kingdom and Righteousness: And let this suffice to satisfy you of your Duty, and what relates to a more distinct understanding of the nature of the Ordinance, and its several Circumstances, I shall be willing to inform you of, in answering your further Queries.

Ch. The Lord reward your readiness to help such
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an ignorant Creature as I am ; and though modesty bids me forbear to give you farther trouble, yet my desire of spiritual benefit, and your encouragements prevail against that, to my accepting your offered kindness. What is an Ordinance, commonly called a Sacrament ?

Min. A Seal of the Covenant of God in Christ, wherein by certain outward signs appointed by Jesus Christ, Christ with all his Benefits are signified, conveyed, and sealed to the worthy Receiver.

Ch. *Why is the Lord's Supper called a Sacrament ?*

Min. The Word Sacraments have bin anciently used to express both Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and was taken up by some of the Fathers from the use of it among the *Latins*, it being a Military Oath and Solemnity, by which the Souldier was engaged to his Duty ; and it was with them so sacred a thing, that it was not lawful for any Man to profess himself a Souldier, till he had taken that Oath or Sacrament.

Ch. *What names do the Scriptures give to Ordinances, commonly called Sacraments ?*

Min. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table, the Communion ; all of which, except Baptism, are several Names for that Ordinance we commonly call the Lord's Supper. *Ephes. 4. 5. Acts 2. 42. 1 Cor. 10. 21. 1 Cor. 10. 16. 1 Cor. 11. 10.*

Ch. *How many Sacraments are there instituted in, and under the New Testament, to be practised and attended on ?*

Min. Two, and only two.

Ch. *By whose Authority are the Sacraments of the New Testament instituted ?*

Min. By, and only by the immediate Authority of Jesus Christ.

Ch. *Are not then those other five which the Pa-*
K *pists*

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pists call Sacraments, truly so called, and warrantably used as such; viz. Of Order, Penance, Marriage, Confirmation, and extreme Unction?

Min. No, for that they either were not instituted by Christ at all, or not by him immediately, or not to the proper ends of a Sacrament.

Ch. *What are the Elements to be used in the Lord's Supper?*

Min. Bread and Wine, and no other. *Luke 22. 19, 20.*

Ch. *Are all the Communicants to receive both of the Bread and Wine?*

Min. Yes, *Luke 22. 19, 20.*

Ch. *Why then do the Papists deny the Wine of the Sacrament to the Laity, and give them only the Bread, or a Wafer?*

Min. For this bold and sacrilegious practice, they can find no allowance in Scripture, nor any Reasons but trivial; and such upon which they may as well corrupt, take away totally, or add to any of Christ's Ordinances and Institutions.

Ch. *What congruity or proportion is there between Bread and Wine the signs, and what is to be signified by them in the Lord's Supper?*

Min. The Wisdom of our Lord Jesus is abundantly expressed in his choice of these Elements, for their aptness to signify what is intended by them; which I shall give you willingly some account and proof of.

Ch. *What fitness is there in them to signify those things? I would gladly be informed more particularly.*

Min. Bread is for Food and Nourishment, the chief and most necessary Food of all other; that which is put frequently for all Food, yea, for all Necessaries of any kind whatsoever; the least morsel of it is compleatly Bread. Thus Christ is Food, and all Necessaries to the Soul, Every worthy Receiver,

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ceiver, receives whole and compleat Christ. And as Corn is not Bread except ground or bruised, so Jesus Christ had not bin Food for us, had he not bin broken and bruised with sorrows and wounds. And as Bread is the common Food of all Men, so is Christ of all Saints.

Ch. These Mysteries in the Bread are exceedingly expressive of Christ and his usefulness, some of which I should never have thought of. Is there any apt signification in the Wine of the Sacrament?

Min. Yea altogether. And as I gave you some particularly of the Sacramental Bread, I shall also hint somewhat of the Wine. As Bread being a solid Body, and so proper to signify the Body of Christ; so Wine being liquid, is fit to signify his Blood. And as Wine is pressed from the Grape, the Blood of Christ was forced out by his Agony, and the wounds of the Cross. Wine is not only for necessity in Faintings, &c. but it is also for Delight; and such is Christ to a Believer, a Cordial and a Pleasure.

Ch. Why is the Bread and Wine separated in the Sacrament, and not together?

Min. Because that the Body and Blood of Christ were separated in his Death; and it is the Death of Christ, or Christ as dying, which is represented.

Ch. May not any Bread and Wine at our common Tables signify these things?

Min. No; for this were to unhallow the Sacramental Elements, whose Holiness consists in being set apart and consecrated for those sacred Uses.

Ch. Who may lawfully consecrate and deliver the Lord's Supper?

Min. A Minister of the Gospel lawfully called, I Cor. 4. 1.

Ch. What are the Actions of the Minister in consecrating the Elements?

Min. A solemn setting them apart to Sacramental use, by Prayer and Blessing, and applying the

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words of Christ used by him in the Institution of the Elements.

Ch. But if the Minister be an Unregenerate Man, or his present disposition and intention be not suitable to that Action; doth it not make him incapable of consecrating the Elements, and unsanctify the whole Action?

Min. No, by no means; for then we cannot tell when we receive the Sacrament, and when not; because we are not certain of any Man's Regeneracy who Administers, nor of his present disposition or intention. And the Papists (who though they regard not much the Regeneracy of their Priests) yet make their intention to consecrate the Elements so necessary to their being a Sacrament, that it is not in the power of their Communicants to be sure they receive their Sacrament; or that they commit not gross Idolatry, by worshipping unconsecrated Bread; though 'tis no less than Idolatry to worship it, when their Priests have made the most of it they can.

Ch. Is not the Bread and Wine by their Consecration transubstantiated, or turned from the substance of Bread and Wine, into the substance and essence of Christ, his Body and Blood?

Min. No: and to believe it is so, is a gross and dangerous Error; and the foundation of many Absurdities and Idolatrous Opinions and Practices, as among the Papists.

Ch. But doth not the Scripture say of it in Christ's own words, This is my Body? And is it not then his Body?

Min. It is the Body and Blood of Christ in the sense that Christ spake it; but Christ did not say this is no longer Bread in substance, but the very substance of my Body.

Ch. How then can we understand the plainest Scriptures, if the Bread be not really Christ's Body?

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Min. No Man questions but such Phrases are often used tropically in Scripture, as also in humane Writings, and therefore are not always to be taken in a strict and proper sense; as, *That Rock was Christ, I am the true Vine*, &c.

Ch. But how shall I know that this is of that kind?

Min. From the intent of Christ in the Institution, and also from a perfect necessity.

Ch. How make you it appear from those grounds?

Min. Christ intended it for a Sacrament, and a Sacrament is a sign of what it represents; both of which the Papists themselves acknowledg. Now it cannot be both the Body of Christ, and the sign of it also; to think otherwise, is a gross mistake and absurdity.

Secondly, If it be to be understood the Body of Christ, and not Bread, we must deny all our Senses, which confirm it to be Bread, and no way substantially changed after the words of Consecration; and if we must deny our Senses in things of this nature, we may also doubt whether those words are in the Book, *This is my Body*.

Ch. If the Bread be not the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ really and substantially, how then are they the Body of Christ and his Blood at all?

Min. They are holy and instituted Signs and Representations of them.

Ch. If they are no more, how then doth a Believer in receiving, and eating, and drinking them, receive, eat, and drink the Body and Blood of Christ?

Min. By receiving those Elements so consecrated as Signs, Seals, and Conveyances of Christ, and his Benefits to his Soul. Of this more anon.

Ch. How can they convey that to Believers, which they have not in themselves?

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Min. As well as a Writing under Hand, and Seal, and Witnesſes, can convey Lands, and other Emoluments, which yet are not ſubſtantially in them.

Ch. I am glad of this light into this Point; a miſtake in which is ſo dangerous. I pray what are the other Actions of the Miniſter in this Ordinance?

Min. After bleſſing the Bread, breaking it, and delivering it to the Communicants in the words of Jeſus Chriſt.

Ch. What is ſignified and done thereby?

Min. That it is in the power of God alone, to make thoſe outward Elements to be effectual to convey the ſpiritual Benefits: Alſo breaking the Bread, ſignifies a Crucified Jeſus, who was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions; and of that one Crucified Chriſt all the Saints do partake.

Ch. Is there no other Action of the Miniſter in this Ordinance?

Min. Yes, a pouring forth of the Wine in the ſight of the Congregation, and delivering it to them, after bleſſing it, in the words of Chriſt.

Ch. And is there any farther ſignification and inſtruction in this?

Min. Yes, hereby is preſented to us Chriſt ſhedding his Life-Blood for us, which is the Sacrifice of Atonement, and by which we obtain Remiſſion, &c.

Ch. Why doth the Miniſter uſe the words, This is my Body, my Blood? &c.

Min. Becauſe in this Action the Miniſter ſtands in Chriſt's ſtead as his Miniſter, and therein Chriſt is preſent by his Spirit and Authority, and doth as really tender, and beſtow himſelf and Benefits, as if he had ſpoken the ſame words in his own viſible Perſon.

Ch. What outward Actions are there more belonging to this Ordinance?

Min. Singing of a Pſalm or Hymn of Praise to the Lord, ſuitable to the Ordinance, by the whole

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Congregation of Communicants together.

Ch. *What is the Posture commanded in this Ordinance for the Minister and Receivers?*

Min. None at all, but left at liberty; so that we preserve Reverence, and Decency, and Expediency.

Ch. *What was the Posture of Jesus Christ and his Disciples at that time?*

Min. Leaning on one anothers Bosoms about the Bed on which the Provision was set; which was the Posture of the Jews at their solemn Meals and Festivals, though but of a civil nature.

Ch. *Are we not bound to the same Posture now?*

Min. No, having no command for it, and Christ admitting the common Feasting Posture of the Jews, 'tis lawful to use ours; but not an indispensable Duty.

Ch. *What time of the day is necessary for the Celebration of this Ordinance?*

Min. No one more than another, only as it may be more expedient.

Ch. *Why did Christ Institute and Celebrate it at Night?*

Min. Because that was the time of eating the Pascheover; and when that Institution ended, Christ would have this immediately to take place. Besides, it was the last opportunity which our Saviour had of liberty to so solemn a Work; and being so nigh his Passion, the remembrance of it by this Token should more prevail with, and affect us.

Ch. *The Elements used in this Ordinance being shadows of good Things to come, are they not abolished by the very nature of the Gospel, whose Worship is purely Spiritual?* Col. 2. 17.

Min. The Ceremonial Meats, Drinks, Days; and other Rites of the Law of Moses, are done away by the coming of Christ signified by them: But this is a Gospel-Institution, and is especially de-

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signed for a due remembrance of Christ's Death already past. *Luke 22. 19.*

Ch. But Christ restraining this Ordinance to the time of his Coming, he being come in the Spirit, Is it not now at an end?

Min. The Opinion of *Quakers, Seekers,* and such-like Enthusiastical and giddy Persons is, that it is abolished by the coming of the Spirit: but herein they shew their ignorance and foolishness; for if they mean the coming of the Spirit in its Sanctifying Operations, it will follow that it was appointed only for Unbelievers, and that the Disciples who communicated with Christ at his Institution had not the Spirit, but were Unbelievers; both which are false and absurd. If they mean the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, or the pouring it forth in an extraordinary measure; the Practice of the Apostles and Church, both at such a Season and afterwards, will abundantly convince them of Error herein. *Acts 2. 42. I Cor. 10. 16.*

Ch. You have satisfied me in the Form, and visible Actions of the Elements of this Ordinance; and that its Obligation is yet in force: I pray tell me now what are the Ends of it?

Min. First and chiefly, a Remembrance of our Lord Jesus, and especially of his Death. *Luke 22. 19. I Cor. 11. 26.*

Ch. But doth not the Word of God, and the Love of God, and our own Comfort and Peace, sufficiently engage and help us to remember Christ and his Death: What need is there then of this Ordinance to those Ends?

Min. Our wise and gracious Lord knows what we need to advantage us in our Duty and Comfort better than we; and we are not to question, but obey his Command in order to it: Besides, this is a Remembrance which hath those solemn considerations in it, which are peculiar to its celebration:
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and we are none of us so mindful of our dear Lord, as may excuse us from using any help he hath appointed and blessed to that end. *Heb. 5.6.*

Ch. Is it a bare Remembrance, or calling to mind Christ and his Death, that is here enjoined?

Min. It is more than so, even such a Remembrance as may work Impressions on us suitable to the Ends of Christ's Death.

Ch. What are they more particularly?

Min. A hatred of Sin, the procuring cause of his Death; a sight of its Evil, which was so great, as not to be expiated without such an inestimable Sacrifice, a confidence of the Love of a Reconciled God to us, and an high admiration of it, and a satisfaction that we shall receive all those Benefits which Christ purchased by the Sacrifice of himself; a holy Resolution to keep our Covenant with God, and by a holy Conversation to walk worthy of his inexpressible Love to us. *2 Cor. 7.1. 1 Pet. 2.24.*

Ch. What is it that Christ gives to the Receiver in this Ordinance?

Min. What he commands us to take, viz. his Body and Blood. *Luke 22.19,20.*

Ch. But seeing the Bread and Wine are not properly and really the Body and Blood of Christ, and they are the only visible things we are to take, how do we receive the Body and Blood of Christ?

Min. By Faith, which discerns and receives Christ, though not in the Bread and Wine, yet in the holy and due use of them.

Ch. What benefit have we by receiving Christ in the Sacrament, seeing we had received him by Faith before?

Min. The benefit of renewed Acts of Faith and Love, and all those Graces and Blessings which are the Fruit of it: and the renewed Acts of God and Christ, confirming their Love to, and Covenant with us; which are of so desirable and profitable import

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ro a holy Soul, as that they can never be too strongly evidenced, or too often repeated. *Cant. 1. 2. Luke 22. 20.*

Ch. What more particularly are the Benefits which Christ gives; and we receive in this Ordinance?

Min. The exercise and increase of every Grace; the cleansing our Souls from the guilt of Sin, further Experiences of the Love of God in Christ, healing the Wounds which Sin had made in our Consciences and Comforts; firmness and confidence in our walking with God; a humble and holy delight in Christ and our Fellow-Members; and a further tie upon us to our Duty: a confirmation of the truth of the Promises of God, to them who remember him in his Ways; and a stronger longing for, and expectation of the blessedness of the Life to come?

Ch. But are these Blessings depending on the Work done, in the outward Actions of it?

Min. No, but on the Blessing of Christ, which extends to this Ordinance when-ever attended on with a due frame. And what can be too great, or too good to be effected, by any means that hath his Commission? *Luk. 24. 30. 1 Cor. 10. 16.*

Ch. But have any found and experienced these good things, pretended to be in the Womb of this Ordinance?

Min. O yes, many of the Saints, and many a time; who therefore account the time of its enjoyments, among the best hours they have had or expected on this side Heaven; and therefore long for their return, and would not be without them for all the World.

Ch. Seeing this Ordinance is called the Communion, and the Lord's Table: inform me, Sir, wherefore it bears those Names?

Min. Because they express much of the nature of it. *Ch.*

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Ch. What, and whom, have we Communion with therein?

Min. With Father, Son, and Spirit; with all the Mystical Body of Christ both in Heaven and Earth, and not only with our Brethren visibly present with us. We have especially Communion with Christ, and partake of him in all his Offices, as our Lord, Teacher, and Saviour: in the benefit of both his Natures as God and Man; in all he was and did on Earth, in all he is and doth in Heaven. And as we have communion with him, so he with us, partaking of our Natures, taking on him all our Sins, and delighting in our Persons and Graces, *Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24.*

Ch. Why is it called the Lord's Table?

Min. Because it is a Spiritual Feast, wherein Christ, as the Food of Faith, is exhibited and sed on. *1 Cor. 10. 21.*

Ch. What special Act of the Receiver is performed, more than he doth at other times?

Min. He doth solemnly and publicly take a Crucified Christ, and profess himself in Covenant, and bind himself to its performance in the Face of the Church; which is not done by private and meer inward Acts of Faith. *1 Cor. 11. 27, 28, 29.*

Ch. Who are the Persons whom Christ calls to this Ordinance?

Min. Believers, and none but Believers.

Ch. Have not unregenerate Persons need of a Saviour? And is it not their Duty to remember Christ, and to receive him?

Min. Yes, all this is true; but they not being in Christ, are incapable of the Seal, and of the Duties of this Ordinance; and Christ gave it to his Disciples only, not to the Multitude. *Mark 14. 14. Mat. 15. 26.*

Ch. Do not the Ministers sin then, when they give it to Hypocrites, telling them, That it is the Body

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Body of Christ broken for them, and the Blood of Christ shed for them?

Min. No, if he be faithful in his Duty.

Ch. What then is his Duty to secure him from Sin?

Min. To examine the Qualifications of those to whom he communicates. *1 Cor. 11. 27. Acts 20. 26.*

Ch. But seeing he cannot search Hearts, may he not be mistaken?

Min. Yes, he may; but he may be certain he hath done his Duty, which is not such as is beyond a possibility herein.

Ch. But doth he not at least delude those in an unregenerate Estate, by so plainly applying the Seals of the Covenant to them?

Min. No, for the Seals do seal conditionally, i. e. upon their Profession of saving-Faith: and moreover the Minister shall deal prudently, as well for the Receiver as for himself, if he shall repeat the words of the Evangelists immediately before the application of the Seals, viz. *And he took Bread, and gave Thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body, &c.* that is, to his Disciples, which he may express in the room of the word *them*, it being the sense of it; *Acts 8. 37. 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24.*

Ch. May not an unregenerate Man receive Christ in the Lord's Supper?

Min. No, he ought not to attempt it as a Seal, neither can he receive Christ therein; for that none receive, to whom God doth not give; besides, he that hath not Faith, receives only the Bread and Wine; if he presume he receives more, he deludes himself. *John 1. 12.*

Ch. But may not a Man be converted by this Ordinance?

Min. Yes, he may; but it not being an Ordinance for that end, but a confirmation of Faith to assurance,

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assurance, and for the increase of Grace, he cannot come to it for that end in Faith; and to sin against God, and presuming without his leave, is no good course to obtain Conversion by. *Mat. 12. 12.*

Ch. What are the necessary Preparations of a Person, and a fitness to receive this Ordinance, without which a Man hath no benefit by it?

Min. First, The habit of Faith, without which a Man is in God's esteem an Enemy, a Dog, a Swine. Secondly, A disposition and hearty-willingness in the Action of receiving, to receive Christ as his Lord and Redeemer. Thirdly, Being in charity with all Men. *John 1. 7. Mat. 15. 26.*

Ch. But are there no other things necessary to a profitable Receiving?

Min. Yea, to a more ample benefiting thereby, and doing our Duty with more comfort.

Ch. What are they?

Min. Renewed Acts of Repentance, clearing to our selves our evidence of our Interest in Christ, and a Heart full of Faith and Love to Christ and our Fellow-Members, and a longing and thirsting for communion with Christ and his Saints, and other Benefits of this Ordinance, and self-examination to those ends. *1 Cor. 10. 16. & 12. 13. & 11. 28.*

Ch. But is not a discerning the Lord's Body necessary also, that we may avoid the threatened damnation?

Min. Yes, it is so.

Ch. But what is this discerning the Lord's Body?

Min. An understanding and esteeming this Ordinance no common Feast, and the Wine and Bread no common Food, but a sacred representation and conveyance of real Christ to a worthy Receiver; and also having a suitable respect to the Ordinances *1 Cor. 11. 27, 29.*

Ch. But if I be defective in any of these, shall I be therefore damned?

Min.

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Min. No, it doth not necessarily follow, though all sin do deserve it, and will effect it without Faith and Repentance: but the Damnation intended in the Text, is to be understood of God's chastising Judgments, which he will inflict on his own Children for a disorderly and contemptuous Receiving of this Ordinance.

Ch. But what if a Man find himself weak, under strong corruptions, and doubting of the sincerity of his Grace; may he come to this Ordinance in that case?

Min. Yes, if he be heartily willing to receive Christ, renew his Covenant, and to have every Grace strengthened, and Corruptions mortified: for true Faith may be without assurance, and consists with many corruptions in being, and doubts; and indeed as such have most need of this strengthening Ordinance, so Christ will be especially kind to, and tender of them, while their weakness and defects are their wound & burden. *Mat. 11. 28. Isa. 20. 4. & 55. 1.*

Ch. What is to be our frame and deportment in this Ordinance?

Min. An attending to every Action in its proper place, without wandering or confusion: a stirring up every Grace, especially Faith and Love into exercise; a joyful and delightful communion with Christ and his People, with a holy and humble reverence.

Ch. How often should we attend on God in this Ordinance?

Min. Often, at least so often (except necessity or weighty considerations forbid) as the Church and Congregation to which we particularly belong do celebrate it. It was the custom in the Primitive Times, to celebrate it every week, or oftner; and it is a manifest Token of our declining, that we can be content with a much seldomer enjoyment of it. *2 Cor. 11. 26. Act. 2. 42.*

Ch. With what People, and in what form must we communicate?

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Min. With a particular Church or Congregation, to some one of which every Believer ought to join himself, for the orderly enjoyment and benefit of all the Ordinances of *Christ*. Acts 9.26. 1 Pet. 2.17.

Ch. May we not communicate with other particular Churches, than that to which we more especially relate?

Min. Yes, occasionally; but ordinarily with that to which we especially belong.

Ch. But may we communicate with such as differ from our Opinion in the Point of Baptism; and some Points of Order and Discipline, and also in some Doctrinal Points?

Min. Yes, for this Communion is with all Saints as such, and not as they are distinguished by some lesser differences. It is a Communion of the whole Mystical Body of *Christ*; so that unless we may be so uncharitable as to cut them off from the Body of *Christ*, we ought to have occasional communion with them. And indeed the opposite Practice herein, is no small disgrace to the Church of *Christ*, discouragement to Holiness, hinderance of Edification and Peace, and advantage to the Designs of the Enemy of Souls. 1 Cor. 10.15, 16. Heb. 12.29.

Ch. But if I know a Person in the Congregation who walks scandalously; may I communicate with the Congregation while he is there, and a Communicant? do I not thereby pollute the Ordinance? and may I expect the benefit of it?

Min. If you know a Person lives scandalously, you ought to take *Christ's* way, to have him admonished, and recovered, or suspended: If you do not this, 'tis your sin; but in the mean time, though his unworthiness may hurt himself, and grieve you, it doth no way pollute the Ordinance, or hinder its benefit to others. Gal. 3.17.

Ch. I am greatly obliged to you (good Sir) for the satisfaction you have given me in these weighty Points,

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Points referring to the Lord's Supper; the Lord reward your labour of Love. I thought to have troubled you farther for some directions as to my temper and behaviour after the Administration, but I will no longer detain you from your Study, which I pray God bless for the farther good of the Church.

I suppose in your Discourse before or after the Celebration of the Lord's Supper on the next Lord's Day, you will direct me and others in that Point, intending then, if the Lord will (though with a deep sense of my great unworthiness, yet with humble confidence in my dear Lord, who graciously invites all that are heavy laden, &c.) to address my self to the Table of the Lord; for which end and purpose I humbly beseech you assist me with your Prayers, that I may not come without the Wedding Garment, but may be so qualified, that my Soul may be satisfied with the likeness of my dear Saviour, and may obtain all those glorious Priviledges and Blessings which are there represented and sealed to every Worthy Communicant.

Min. Not only I (an unworthy Ambassador of Jesus Christ) but the Lord of the Feast himself will welcome such as you, who come with hungry and thirsting to the Table of the Lord, where he will satisfy your Soul as with Marrow and Fatness, and cause you to drink of the River of his Pleasures.

As for your carriage afterwards, do but seriously read Mr. Dyke, and he will direct you in that, and all other Points practically, referring to this solemn Ordinance of the Lord's Supper; only this general direction I leave with you, You must not only receive the Lord Jesus, but walk in him, unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work.

Ch. The Lord grant we may all live suitable to the great means we enjoy.

Min. Amen. Amen. For which end the Lord assist us with continual supplies of his Holy Spirit. Farewel.

Medita-

Meditations and Prayers, before, at, and after the Lord's Supper.

A Meditation any time before the participation of the Lord's Supper, wherein the Soul represents to it self the Nature, Ends, and Benefits of, and Qualifications for that Holy Ordinance.

ANd now, oh my Soul, the reverend Author having, in the foregoing Treatise, convinced thee of the Obligation that lies upon thee, and all that profess the Christian Name in reality, to remember the death of our dear Saviour, and the great things he hath done and suffered for poor Mankind; seeing a *Feast of fat things, a Feast of Wine on the Lees; a Feast of fat things full of Marrow, of Wine on the Lees well refined*, is prepared, and thou invited to it; enter *then into thy Closer*, and see whether thou hast the Wedding Garment on thee; whether thou hast all those Divine Qualifications that will make thee a welcome Guest at this Heavenly Feast: Examine then, hast thou a clear and distinct knowledg of the Nature and Ends of this *great Mystery of Godlineſs, God manifested in the Flesh*; that it is a holy Feast in commemoration of thy dear Saviour, especially of his Death and Sufferings, in which thou for thy part makeſt a solemn profession of his Religion, and doſt by this Holy Rite, tie thy self in the strictest Covenant to follow thy Lord unto the Death, and to live in love and charity with all thy Christian Brethren: and he
for

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for his part makes a representation of his dying Love unto thee, and confirms the continuance of it, giving us assurance, that he will make us Heirs of all the Blessings which are the purchase of his Body and Blood broken and shed for us; the sum of which is, *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.* So that when the Minister gives the Bread and Cup to us; we should think that Christ by him gives us Tokens and Pledges of his Love. And when we *take, eat, and drink,* we should look upon it as our assent and consent to all his holy Will, *in hope of that Eternal Life which God, that cannot lie, hath promised to us.*

In short, dost thou not know that the whole Mystery is a representation and maintaining of Union and Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the Members of Christ, a renewing of a Covenant between God and thee; God seals when he gives, and thou sealest when thou receivest; he by *giving,* and thou by *receiving,* engage one another to perform mutual Promises; he his Promises of giving thee his Son, *who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption;* and thou thy Promises of loving him with all thy Heart, thy Neighbour as thy self; especially such as bear his Image, and in doing and suffering whatsoever is his good Will and Pleasure?

Does the consideration of these glorious things cause me to reckon all other things but Dung and Dross, in comparison to the knowledge of Christ, and him Crucified? Is my Faith Divine and Operative? Do I receive Jesus Christ as he is offered to me in the Gospel, not only as a Jesus to save me, but as a Lord to rule over me, and to destroy all the Works of the Devil in me? and as a Prophet to teach and to lead me into the way everlasting? Do I heartily mourn for all Sin? Do I look upon him, whom my
sins

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Sins have pierced, and mourn? Do I not so much loath sin for the Punishment it brings, as for its contrariety to the holy Nature of God? Do I not spare any *Agag*, any ruling Sin, withdraw no wedge of Gold, or Babylonish Garment, make no League with any *Gibecnite*? but do I heartily bring even the most Beloved Lust to the Cross of a Crucified Saviour, that there it may be destroyed, so as to have no more dominion over me? Do I love the Lord my God with all my Heart, and with all my Soul, and with all my Might? Have I such a sence of Divine Love as swallows up all other Loves? Is Christ all in all to me, so that I can say, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth I desire besides thee*? Do I endeavour to conform to his Image more and more, it being the properrie of Love to imitate the Object beloved? Doth the love of *Christ* constrain me, oh my Soul, so that I am willing, not only to do, but to suffer for him that has done so much for me? Do I love all Mankind, and am I ready to do them all Offices of kindness, according to my Ability, but do I especially love them that bear the Image of the Blessed Jesus? Am I always ready to forgive, even as God for *Christ's* sake forgives me? Am I fully resolved to conform to all the Precepts of my dear Lord? Is it my Meat and Drink to do his Will? Is my Obedience sincere, universal, constant, and uniform? Have I respect to all the Commandments of God, not only to those that best comply with my natural temper, and worldly Interest, but to those that cross my most beloved Lust; yea, and to such as require me to part with every thing that is dear to me in this Life, when the Providence of God calls for it?

Have I a great sence of what God hath done for my Soul, so as my Soul is ravished with the thoughts thereof, and my Lips do continually *overflow with his Praises*? Are the Meditations of a crucified Saviour

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Saviour sweet to my Soul, so that I rejoyce when I have an opportunity to *mention the loving kindness of the Lord according to all he hath done for my Soul?*

Are the Graces of God stirring and operative in me? Is my knowledg more spiritual and experimental? my Faith more strong and vigorous? my Corruptions more discovered and subdued? my Love more fervent? my Conversation more Heavenly? each Faculty in its proper Sphere more transformed into the same Image with *Christ Jesus*? Are all these things in me? or, in defect of any, do the desires and longings of my Soul after them, appear to be sincere and unfeigned, by daily imploying all my strength to improve every opportunity to farther my proficiency therein? Then mayest thou come to the Table of the Lord, where that Life thou hast received, may be further encreased and confirmed.

Being thus prepared by him, from whom all the good thou hast or canst expect comes, go then, oh my Soul, and open thine Eyes, that thou mayest behold the Divine Attributes displayed for the redemption of Mankind in a crucified Saviour, represented to thee in the Elements of Bread broken, and Wine poured forth, the shadows of thy Lord, under which thou mayest sit with delight, and his Fruit (taken by Faith) will be sweet to thy taste.

Awake, awake, oh my Soul, rouze up all the Graces of the Spirit in thee; *Awake, O North Wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out; let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant Fruits.*

Oh my God, the Work is great I am to do, and of my self I have not strength to perform it in a right manner; therefore I look up unto thee from whom alone cometh my help; Oh let my Prayer come up before thee, my God and my King.

The

The Preparatory Prayer.

O Most Glorious God, who art the Fountain of all Goodness, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift; by whom I live, move, and have my being, not only in reference to the Life of Nature; but Grace and Glory also. Oh, my God, without thee I can do nothing, being by Nature dead in Sins and Trespases, therefore I come unto thee, the Author and giver of Life, that thou wouldst be pleased to quicken this Soul of mine that cleaves unto the Dull; that thou wouldst lift up the *Gates of my Soul, that the Lord of Life and Glory may come in,* and inspire me with new Life and Spirit, to perform holy Actions after a holy manner. Alas! oh my God, what are all my Preparations! when I have done all, I am an unprofitable Servant; whatsoever I have done I am ashamed of, and therefore thou mayest much more loath and despise it, for thou art a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: come thou therefore (O my God) *and search my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting.* O be thou pleased to give me the saving knowledge of thee, and Christ whom thou hast sent, which is Life eternal; a lively Faith in the Lord Jesus, that I may receive him as my God, and my King; a Repentance never to be repented of, that I may hate that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good; a fervent love unto thee, who so loved the World, as to give thy only begotten Son to die for it; and to my dear Lord and Saviour, who hath loved us, and given himself for us, an Offering, and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour; and a sincere Love to all that love the Lord Jesus, that the same mind that was in Christ may

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be in me, that I may be compassionate, pittifull, and courteous, forgiving those that have offended me, even as God for Christ's sake forgives me. Let this Divine Love express it self in all Acts of Obedience ; and let my Obedience be sincere and universal, having respect to all thy Commands. Oh ! do thou enlarge my Heart, then shall I run the way of thy Commandments ; then shall I desire no other pleasure than to please thee. Oh ! bow the Heavens, and come down and fill my Soul with thy Glory ; say, *Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Oh, my God ! unless thou interpose thy Power, that little goodness that is in me will come to nothing ; such is the corruption of my Nature, the inveterate Habits which I have contracted ; the Snares of the World, and the Temptations of the Devil ; that these good Motions, these holy Resolutions, these devout Affections will soon be smothered and choaked, ere I can approach the Table of my Lord, unless thou cherish them by the Power and Might of thy Spirit. O, my God, since I have bestowed some pains on my Heart, and conceived some little Hopes, suffer them not to be frustrated in a Night. Oh ! spread the Wings of thy Goodness over me, and maintain that which not I but thou hast wrought in me. Oh ! let me find, in the Morning of that Blessed Day when I shall approach thy Holy Table, that I am filled with thy Likeness, that my Affections are grown beyond the strength of a Man, and that thy Power doth rest on me. I leave my self with thee, hoping that either I am, or would be such as thou wouldst have me to be ; draw me, and I will run after thee, yea, *we will run after thee*, and proclaim to others the *loving-kindness of the Lord*, who hath *remembered us in our low estate*, and hath raised up for us a mighty Salvation. Blessing and Praise, Honour and Glory, be unto him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Soliloquie at waking.

HOW precious are thy thoughts to me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! when I awake I am still with thee. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee ; my Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land where no Water is, to see all *thy glorious Attributes, in the redemption of mankind, passing before me* in the Sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee ; thus will I bless thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in thy Name. My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips, when I remember thee on my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-Watches. Because thou hast bin my Help, and hast sent thy Son to be a Prince and a Saviour, therefore in the shadow of thy Wings will I rejoice ; my Soul followeth hard after thee. Oh God ! my Heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise, even with my Glory ; awake Psaltery and Harp, I my self will awake early. My Soul waiteth for thee, O Lord ! more than they that watch for the Morning. Oh ! lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, and now I am awake, let me be satisfied with thy likeness. *Amen.*

Meditations for the morning of the Sacrament Day.

O Blessed Day, that brings tidings of great Joy, the day-spring from on high doth visit us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the ways of Peace. The Sun of Righteousness is rising (O my Soul) with healing under his Wings ;
Awake,

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Awake, awake then, and prepare to meet this Blessed *Bridegroom*, who is *hastning out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong Man to run his Race.* Go and look upon him this day in his Red Garments, behold him in the strength of his Love breaking through all the Clouds of Darkness, through the Curse of the Law, the Wrath of God, the Agonies of Death, to bring forth the Fruits of his eternal Love to thy Soul: Rouze up thy self, O my Soul, and join thy self with those Morning Stars, the Angels, who sang for joy when the Foundation of this new World was laid; who desire to look into this great Mystery, *God manifested in the Flesh*; and not being able to comprehend it, break forth in Admirations, crying, *Glory be to God on high, on Earth Peace, and good-will to Men.* Oh that I had the Affections of an Angel, and the Voice of a Seraphim, to proclaim the loving-kindness of the Lord! Surely, O my Soul! thou shouldst be more affected (if it were possible) than those glorious Creatures; for thy Lord took not upon him the *Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.* Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that thou shouldst thus unexpectedly visit him? that thy only Son our Lord should lay aside his Glory, and take upon him the form of a Servant, and be manifested in our Flesh? that he should leave the *Hallelujahs* of Angels, to endure the Contradictions of Sinners; that the Lord and giver of Life should die the most ignominious Death on the Cross; that in his Death, as in the Deluge, all the Windows of Heaven above, and all the Fountains beneath, should be opened; the Wrath of God, the Cruelty of Men, the Fires of Hell breaking in together upon him, and his Soul surrounded with Sorrows, and the Snares of Death; that *he that knew no sin, should be made sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.*

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him. Were ever any Sorrows like unto his ? Was ever any Love like unto this ? Be astonished, oh Heavens, be amazed, oh Earth ! Be silent all Flesh, and let all my thoughts be swallowed up in admiring this great and amazing condescension. *My Soul doth magnify the Lord, my Spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour : for he hath regarded the low estate of his Servants, and hath visited and redeemed his People ; and hath raised up for us a Horn of Salvation in the House of his Servant David.*

Go, oh my Soul, into the Assemblies of the Saints, and with them declare the wonderful Works of the Lord ; look down into the great Depths of thy Lord's Humiliation, and be amazed, confounded, and afflicted : Behold there the degrees of his Sufferings, and by them measure the degrees of thy Sins, and his Love ; look up and fix thine Eyes on that Holy Place where thy Saviour is entered, that some little glimps of his Glory may break forth upon thee, that thou mayest see the Riches and Treasures of his Kingdom. Look into thy self, and stir up all the Graces of God's Spirit in thee, to bless and magnify him who has done and suffered so much for thee.

Renouncing then thine own Righteousness, and Preparations, in the Name, Merits, Strength, and Righteousness of thy Lord Jesus, and in Obedience to his Commands, go, oh my Soul, with hungerings and thirstings, to this Holy Feast, that thou mayest be satisfied with thy Saviour's Likeness ; go and renew thy Covenant with thy Lord, and commemorate, and be affected with his Death ; go, and declare to thy self and others, that Jesus Christ is the *Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World* ; go and show it forth to God the Father, and beseech him to behold the wounds of thy dear Saviour, and intreat Mercy and Forgiveness, by virtue of that voluntary Sacrifice, with which he is

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well.

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well-pleased: Go, and own and encrease thy Spiritual Union and Communion with him, and all his Members, that being more united to that Body, thou mayest receive more Life and Spirit to do the Will of thy Heavenly Master. Go, and farther thy joy in the Holy Ghost, peace of Conscience, and hopes of eternal Life. Endeavour there to get more power over Sin, more strength in Grace; make there fresh application of that precious Blood, that so all the Blessings of the Covenant may be sealed to thee.

Oh, my God, I go unto thy Table, oh stir up in me thirsting desires after thee, strong expectations to receive those Blessings there represented to me, and do thou make them good unto me, and all that is within shall bless and praise thy Holy Name. *Amen. Amen.*

Blessed is the Man whom thou chusest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy House, even of thy Holy Temple.

And now, O my Soul, thou art going to present thy self among the Sons of God, Satan (that envious Spirit) will endeavour to disturb and distract thee, therefore address thy self again for Divine Assistance, according as thou art directed in the *Preparation-Prayer*; or briefly thus.

A Prayer sometime before the Lord's Supper.

O Most Glorious Lord God, in whose presence the Glorious Angels cover their Faces, as not worthy to behold thee, and their Feet, as not worthy to be beheld by thee. Oh! be thou pleased to fill my Soul with such an awful sense of thine excellent Greatness, that I may at all times (especially in my solemn Addresses) behave my self

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self with suitable Affections and Devotion towards thee. I humbly acknowledg I am not worthy to look up unto thee, a God of infinite Holiness, *a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity.* I am not fit to tread thy Holy Courts, to approach thy Holy Table, for I am an unclean Creature; *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me: I have gone astray from thee ever since I was born, and have drunk down Iniquity like Water.* My Life has bin a continual Act of Rebellion against thee; I have broken thy Holy and Righteous Laws, in Thought, Word, and Deed: I have abused thy Goodness, and slighted thy amazing Love to me, and all Mankind, in the Lord Jesus, and (which I should tremble to think on) have trod under-foot the Son of God, and have counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith I was sanctified, an unholy thing; have done despite unto the Spirit of Grace; and have rendered ineffectual all the methods of thy Grace and Providence, and all the Vows and Promises I have made of better Obedience, so that I am out of measure sinful. Oh Holy and Righteous God, I deserve nothing but everlasting destruction from thy Presence, and from the glory of thy Power. But thou art a merciful God, thou sittest on a Throne of Grace, and art ready to receive all returning Penitents: behold a poor Prodigal now before thee; Oh, do thou receive me into the Arms of thy Mercy, and for the sake of thy Son, whom thou hast sent to be the Propitiation for our sins, be thou reconciled unto me; pardon all my sins, create in me a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me; and seeing the grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, let it be effectual in me, teaching me, that denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, I may live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, looking for that blessed Hope, and

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the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. Oh grant me (blessed God) the continual Aids of thy Holy Spirit, that I may grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for which end and purpose bleſs all thy Ordinances unto me, particularly that of the Lord's Supper, that I am now going to partake of; rebuke Satan, restrain all earthly and carnal Affections; fix and spiritualize my Thoughts, awaken all the Graces of thy Holy Spirit in me; stir up in me most ardent Desires, inflame me with most fervent Affections, and let all that is within me attend upon this solemn Service, that by this blessed Ordinance I may get more power over sin, more strength to do thy Will, and be made more conformable unto the Image of my dear Saviour. Assist me, I beseech thee (O my God) in every part of this Duty, that I may remember the sufferings of my crucified Lord, so as to be crucified with him, and his great Love, so as to love him with all my Heart and Soul, and my Neighbour as my self; and the New Covenant made in his Blood, so as to have his Laws more engraved on my Heart, and all the precious Promises he thereby seals to me, so as wholly to resign up my self to him, and expect all good from him who is the *brightness of thy Glory, the Prince of Peace, the Fountain of all goodness, and the Lord our Righteousness*, in whose Name, Merits, and Words, I further call upon thee.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

How

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How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! Psal. 84. 1, 2.

(1.) When you are come to the Table.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his Temple.

Having liberty, and access with boldness unto the Throne of Grace, by the Blood of Jesus, the High Priest of our Profession, let us draw near with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water.

Thou art now going, oh my Soul, to feast with that God that stretches out the Heavens like a Curtain; that lays the Beams of his Chambers in the Waters; that maketh the Clouds his Chariots, and rideth on the Wings of the Wind. The Lord Jesus invites thee, and bids thee welcome to this Feast; and he himself is the Provision, of which he bids thee, and all that come with hungriings and thirstings after him; *Eat, O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

Oh Lord! I am not worthy to eat of the Crumbs that fall from the Table of thy Creatures, or to breath in thy Air, much less to sit at thy Table, and eat of this *Feast of fat things*, this Food of Angels: But seeing thou hast invited me, with all humility and thankfulness I accept thy gracious Invitation. Oh! do thou put the Wedding Garment on me, and stir up in me hungerings and thirstings after Righteousness, that so I may be filled.

Oh, my God! thou that givest Bread to Man on Earth, and gavest Manna to the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness; Oh! give me ever more of that Bread which came down from Heaven, that I

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may be strengthened to do thy Will; give me to drink of the Waters of Life, that I may never more thirst after this vain World.

Call in, compose, and spiritualize all my Thoughts at this solemn Ordinance: Pardon me, and every one here present that prepareth his Heart to seek thee, though we be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. Let inward spiritual Grace accompany the outward visible Signs, that the Holy Elements may be Bread of Life, and Wine of Consolation to our Souls. Let us behave our selves at this Table, with all outward and inward Reverence; let us renew our Covenant, and partake of all the Benefits of a Crucified Saviour, that so we may go away rejoicing; and by the strength and comfort we receive at this Heavenly Feast, let us be more enlarged to run the ways of thy Commandments. Oh let us find that *thou hast wrought all our Works in us, and for us; and then not unto us, but unto thy Name alone shall be the glory.* Amen.

- (2.) When you see the Minister at the Table, to consecrate the Bread and Wine, by Prayer, and the words of Christ's Institution, attend with all reverence and admiration; and say,

Without controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness! God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory.

Behold, Oh my Soul, the eternal Wisdom of God incarnate, to reveal and communicate his Will, his Love, his Spirit, his Glory to sinful miserable Man! Lord, what is Man that thou art thus mindful of him! or the Son of Man, that thou shouldst thus visit him! Be astonished, oh my Soul, that

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that Heaven should so condescend to Earth, that Man should be so united to God ; Oh, lose thy self in the Contemplations of this Miracle of Love, that Christ should dwell in our Flesh, and that his Flesh should be our Food : he gave himself to redeem us from our Sins, and now he gives himself to be the strength and health of our Souls. He gave himself when he was among Men ; he gives himself now when he is with God ; and if it were necessary, he would come and die again for the Sons of Men.

(3.) When you see the Bread broken, and the Wine poured forth.

Behold, oh my Soul, thy Crucified Saviour ; look upon him whom thy sins have pierced, and mourn. Oh that mine Eyes were a Fountain of Tears, that I might mourn for my sins that have crucified my dearest Lord ! He was wounded for our Transgressions ; he was bruised for our Iniquities ; the chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed ; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief, he poured out his Soul unto Death, and he was numbred with Transgressors ; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for Transgressors.

Who is this, O my Soul ! that cometh from Edom, with died Garments from Bozrah, red in his Apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength : Who is mighty to save ? Is it not thy Saviour, who alone trod the Wine-press of his Father's Wrath for such vile Sinners as I am ?

Oh, my Lord ! How shall I present my self before thee, who am one of those who occasioned these Sorrows, these Agonies, these Wounds, this bloody Passion, this cruel Death of thine ? Oh what Love is this, that *when we were Enemies, Christ died for us* ? Oh what a provoking thing is Sin, that no-

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thing less than the Blood of my dear Lord could satisfy the Wrath of God ! Oh how great is the pollution of Sin, that nothing less than this Blood can cleanse me from it ! Oh my Lord ! look upon me as thou didst on *Peter*, that I may weep bitterly. What have I to do any more with Sin ? I bring all my Corruptions now (oh my dear Saviour) to thy Cross ! let them be nailed and mortified there, that they may have no more dominion over me ! Oh let me be conformable unto thy Passion, that Sin may be the greatest wound and grief to my Soul ; and unto thy death in dying to Sin, that henceforth I may obey it no more in the Lusts thereof.

(4.) When the Bread is brought to you.

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under the Roof of my House ; but speak the Word, and thy Servant shall be healed.

Whence is it that thou shouldst so love me, as to offer thy self to me ; that thou shouldst command me to accept of thee, and all the glorious Benefits purchased by thy Life & Death, even to me who have so much offended thee ! Whence is it that thou that art in Heaven amongst them that continually love and serve thee, shouldst vouchsafe to come down to such a vile Sinner as I am, who know little else but how to provoke thee ! Oh the height, the depth, the breadth, the length of this Love of thine, who can conceive it ?

Seeing then thou art pleased to offer thy self unto me, my Soul panteth after thee, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks. I humbly stretch out my hand to receive thee ; I open my Mouth wide that thou mayest fill me ; Oh let me taste that the Lord is good.

(5.) When

(5.) When you take the Bread into your Hand.

Behold (oh God the Father) the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World. Behold the Sacrifice of the Everlasting Covenant ! Is not this thy well-beloved Son, in whom thou art well-pleased ? Behold his Wounds ! behold his Blood, which speaketh better things than the Blood of Abel. Oh ! let the Merits of my dear Saviour free me from the guilt of Sin. For the sake of that Sacrifice have Mercy upon me, and all Mankind, and let me and all the World feel the Power of his Intercession. I know thou hearest not Sinners, but him thou hearest always, and hast not with-holden from him the Request of his Lips. Oh let me, and all know, that he lives, and was dead, and that he is alive for ever-more.

(6.) When you eat the Bread, resign up your self to him as your Lord and King, and renew your Baptifinal Covenant, in these or the like words.

I do with all humility (oh blessed Saviour) in the presence of God, Angels, and Men, devote my self, my Soul and Body, to thee only, renouncing the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. I freely accept thee as my Lord, to rule over me, and to govern me by thy Laws. Other Lords have had dominion over me, but now I will only make mention of thy Name ; None but Christ, none but Christ. I am not mine own, I am bought with a price, therefore will I glorifie God in my Body, and my Spirit, which are God's. My Beloved is mine, and I am his.

And now I have taken thee for my Lord, I also take thee, with all humility, for my Saviour : O be

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thou a Jesus unto me, and save me from my sins ; give me more power over my Lusts ; strengthen me with all might and power in the Inward Man, that I may do thy Will with that freedom and delight as it is done in Heaven. O, my God ! fulfil in me, all the good pleasure of thy Will, and the work of Faith with Power ; fill me with all joy and Peace, in believing ; let me abound in Hope ; let me be rooted and grounded in Love. O that I could love thee more ! O that I had a thousand Hearts to correspond with so great Love thou hast manifested unto such vile Creatures as I am ! O, fill me with thy Holy Spirit which thou hast promised to them that ask it ! The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Lord, I believe, help mine Unbelief. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things ?

(7.) When you see the Elements given to others.

We being many, are but one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread, and Members one of another : by one Spirit are all baptized into one Body, and bin made to drink into one Spirit : And Christ hath reconciled us in one Body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Oh that henceforth I may be of one Heart with all his Disciples, and love them as he loved us !

Oh thou that causes thy Sun to rise on the Just and Unjust, and thou that didst die for us when we were Enemies, inflame my Soul with good-will to all Mankind, with fervent Love unto all that are the purchase of thy Love ; whereby I may be powerfully moved to put on Bowels of Mercy, to bear all things, to forgive my Enemies, and do them good ; to endure all things ; to follow after things that
make

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make for Peace, and things wherewith I may edify others. Oh! let us all endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

Oh that we could see that Holy Spirit which gathered so many Nations, and Tongues, and People of sundry sorts, into one Body of the Church, descending once more to join together all Christian People, that *we may be like-minded, having the same Love, being of one accord and one mind, that we may speak the same things, and that there be no Divisions among us; that we may with one Heart, and with one Mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath loved us, therefore we ought also to love one another.*

(8.) When the Cup is brought to you.

I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord, and pay the Vows I have made, &c.

Oh blessed Jesus! let this Blood of thine purge my Conscience from dead Works, and quicken me to serve the Living God. Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. Oh let me feel the efficacy of thy Blood for that end and purpose. Alas! alas! how imperfect are my Graces? how dark is my Knowledge? how cold my Love? how unconstant and partial my Obedience? how faint my Desires after thee? but the least degree of Grace is the Fruit of thy Blood. O grant that through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, I may be made perfect in every good Work to do thy Will, working in me that which is well-pleasing in thy sight.

When you have drunk of the Cup.

I have now drunk of the Blood of the New-Covenant, so that now I am bound in a stricter Bond than

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than ever ; I have now lifted my self, and as it were, taken a Sacramental Oath, that I will serve under the Captain of my Salvation : Oh let me not desert his Service ! this Blood of my Saviour will be upon me, and witness, and cry to Heaven against me if I fall back, and prove unfaithful. Oh let me never be guilty of the Blood of Christ ; that I may not put him to death that came to save my Life ! Oh my dear Lord, let thy Blood like Wine run through all my Veins, and diffuse it self into all the Vital Powers of my Soul, and make me more quick and active in thy Service, more strong and courageous to fight under thy Banner, and to get Victorie over all my Enemies, and at last obtain a full conquest.

(9.) If the Worthy Communicant finds himself enlarged in the Contemplations of Divine Love represented to him in this Holy Ordinance, let him suffer his thoughts to glide a while (if he has time) into the Meditations of the Joys of Heaven.

Consider, O my Soul ! that this Wine here in the Kingdom of the Son, is an Emblem of the Wine in the Kingdom of the Father : in this World is the Kingdom of Christ ; in the World to come shall be the Kingdom of God ; for so Christ tells thee, *I will not drink of the Fruit of the Vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.* What is done here, is but a shadow of what shall be done hereafter in a more excellent manner : These are but the foretastes of those Holy Pleasures he will bestow upon thee in the other World, but the *Antepasts* of the Eternal Supper, but the *Vigils* of the Everlasting Rest. These are but the Earnest of a better Inheritance, the Assurance of better Cheer, where thy Appetite shall be satisfied, and thy Thirst quenched ; where thou shalt see the Lord Jesus in his glorious Apparel, and
seat.

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feast thine Eyes with the sight of his Beauty ; yea, where thou shalt be ravished with the sight of God himself, and shalt drink of the Pleasures that stream from the light of his Countenance. Oh ! when shall I appear before God ! when shall I bath my self in the Ocean it self ! when shall I pass from this dark Glass, from the Vail of these Sacraments, to the clear Vision of my dear Lord ! when shall I be joined to the Heavenly Quire, and be taken up, without any interruption, in the Angelical Employ, in singing Praises and Hallelujahs unto him that sits on the Throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever !

(10.) The *Worthy Communicant* ought to close this solemn Service with Thanksgiving ; but if he have not time to do it at the Table of the Lord, let him entertain his Soul with this Angelical Imploiment in his Closet at home.

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, and unto thee shall the Vow be performed.

It becomes thee (O my Soul) at all times to praise the Lord for his *wonderful Works to the Children of Men*, but especially at the Table of the Lord, where thou art entertained with all the Divine Attributes, in the glorious contrivance of Man's Salvation by the Lord Jesus ; but who can sufficiently praise the Divine Majesty ! the Tongues of Angels stammer in uttering his Goodness, and I become dumb the more I endeavour to speak of the *wonderful Works of the Lord*. The highest of my Praises is, humbly and affectionately to acknowledg my inability for this Heavenly Imploiment, the greatest of my Endeavours is daily to admire and adore the Divine Love, which I cannot comprehend. O that I had the Wings of a Seraphim, that I might fly up and join my self to the Heavenly Quire, and there continually be about the Throne of Glory, giving

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giving Praises, Honour, and Glory, to him that sits upon the Throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever. But while I am here below, about the Throne of Grace, let me begin the Work of Heaven as well as I can: And, O blessed God, do thou tune my Soul into this Heavenly Melody; add this to all thy other Mercies, write a Law of Thankfulness on my Heart, and *put a new Song into my Mouth, even praise unto thee, O God.*

Oh! how shall I mention the loving-kindness and praises of the Lord, according to the multitude of his tender Mercies unto the Children of Men, according to all he hath bestowed on us, and his great goodness to the House of *Israel*. O that I could proclaim his Love to all the World! O that my Harp and my Glory could reach the Quire above, and awaken every Creature below, that with united Hearts and Voices we may all *sing unto the Lord, and make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation.*

Oh! give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, *for his Mercy endureth for ever.*

Oh! give thanks unto the Lord our Saviour, *for his Mercy endureth for ever.*

Oh give thanks unto the God of Gods, *for his Mercy endureth for ever.*

To him, who alone doth great Wonders, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him, that by Wisdom made the Heavens, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and stretched out the Earth above the VVaters, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him that supports all things in Heaven and Earth, in that beauty and order that our Eyes behold, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him who wonderfully made us, graciously preserves us, and giveth Food to all Flesh, for his Mercy endures for ever.

To

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To him who remembred Man in his low estate, when he had lost the Divine Image and Favour, was pleased so to love him, as to give his only begotten Son to redeem him from sin and misery, for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him who laid aside his Glory, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him who hath loved us, and washed us from all our sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God our Father; for his Mercy endureth for ever.

To him who hath saved us from the Wrath of God, redeemed us from all our Enemies, obtained for us an everlasting Redemption, and given us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness; for his Mercy endureth for ever.

Oh give thanks unto the God of Heaven, [the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier]; for his Mercy endureth for ever.

The closing Prayer for all Mankind.

O Lord God, who art the Fountain of all Mercy and Goodness, be thou propitious to all Mankind, let the knowledg of a Crucified Saviour cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Sea; let all the People praise thee, O God, let all the People praise thee; let them lift up their Hands unto thee in the Name of Christ, and bow their Knees unto him, and let every Tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And oh that all they that confess him, may have their Conversation as becomes the Gospel, and be continually offering up the Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving, and be communicating and doing good, Inspire the Kings of the Earth, and all People, Princes,

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Princes, and all Judges of the Earth, both young Men and Maidens, old Men and Children, that they may praise thy Name, that God in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus; to whom be all honour, praise, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

It may happen that there may be but few Communicants, and so the Worthy Communicant may not have time to do all this; let him then attend, with all seriousness and devotions, to the Confessions, Petitions, Thanksgivings, and Exhortations made by the Minister. And after the receiving the Bread, let him after this manner express his Affections, briefly.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who according to his abundant Mercy, hath visited us in our low estate, and pitied us when we lay in our Blood, by raising up for us a mighty Salvation; *Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not, but a Body hast thou prepared for thy Son Jesus, who has done thy Will, O God, and made himself an Offering for Sin, and made us one Body with himself, and purchased for us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness.* Blessing and Honour, Glory and Power, be unto thee, O Lord God Almighty, and unto thy Son, our Lord and Saviour, for ever and ever. I accept thee as my King, Priest, and Prophet; I entirely offer up my Soul and Body unto thee, (O blessed Jesus); I lift up my hands unto thy Commands, O let me be so strengthened by *this Bread that came down from Heaven*, and which I have now taken, that I may be enabled to do thy Will here in Earth, as it is done in Heaven. *Amen.*

After

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After the receiving of the Cup, let the Worthy Communicant lift up his Heart, and say ;

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places in Christ, in whom we have redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the Riches of his Grace, wherein he hath abounded to us in all Wisdom and Prudence.

O blessed Lord! let this Blood of thine, which by Faith I have now applied to my Conscience, speak better things than the Blood of Abel; let it bring me that Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, and cleanse me from all Uncleanneſs, both of Flesh and Spirit; and inspire me with new strength and courage, to run the Race that is set before me, looking unto thee (O blessed Jesus) the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was set before thee, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and art now set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

And oh that this precious Blood of thine may more cement and unite all Christian People in fervent Charity, that we may be ever kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, that so with united Minds and Affections, we may be still praising thee, and saying, *Blessed be the God of Heaven and Earth, who only doth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious Name for ever, and let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory. Amen. Amen.*

The Worthy Communicant, retiring himself into his Closet, after the participation of the Lord's Supper.

Come, O my Soul, let us retire, let us not presently

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sently go down from this Mount into the World ; let us entertain no other Company but our dear Lord, nor admit of any other Discourse, than such as concerns our Eternal Welfare. Yea, when I come to converse with my lawful Concerns below, let me still be looking towards him as my only happiness ; let my Heart be so filled with him, that other Objects may find no place, nor make any impression on me.

If the Communicant, upon Examination, find his temper and behaviour to be unsuitable in the time of Administration.

Alas ! oh my Soul ! how cold were my Affections, how dull my heart ! how confused, distracted, and worldly my Thoughts ! how unsuitable was my carriage at this Holy Ordinance ! When I beheld my Saviour hanging on the Cross, when I beheld his Body wounded and bruised, and his Blood poured forth freely and abundantly, and yet I could not shed one tear for my Sins ! The Rocks rent asunder at his Passion ; the Earth groan'd under the weight of his Cross ; the Sun shrunk in his Head, as ashamed to look on such a Spectacle, and affrighted at the horror of such a sight : And yet, alas ! alas ! my Heart was harder than the Rocks, my Soul was not confounded and ashamed, nor groan'd under the guilt and weight of those sins of mine, that thus pressed and wounded my Lord and Saviour, and caused him to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* O that now my Soul could even break for grief, that I should look upon him whom my sins have thus pierced and wounded, and yet be no more affected ! That I should be present at such a Furnace of Love, flaming in the Heart of the blessed Jesus towards vile Sinners, and yet that my Affections should frieze over such a Fire !
Oh,

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Oh, my God, did such a cold temper suit thy awful presence! Should the represented Agonies and Sufferings of my dear Lord, be beheld by a Spirit so dull, and no more concerned! and no more wounded for my sins that wounded him and put him to death! It was the aggravation of the *Israelites* sin, that they *provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red Sea*, the place where their Deliverance was wrought! but, O my dear Saviour, my hard Heart hath provoked thee in a higher degree, even at the Red Sea of thy precious Blood, by which my Eternal Salvation was wrought.

Jonathan's Eyes were enlightened by tasting of a little Hony that dropt on the ground. I have tasted of that Hony that drops from the Rock of Ages, and yet mine Eyes were not enlightened. Alas! alas! O my God, that I should relish this Divine Food no more! that the flames of Divine Love should not warm my cold Heart more! that the wounds of my bleeding Saviour should not pierce me more! O the stupifying and benumbing power of Sin! O the sad effects of Unbelief!

O Lord my God, I humbly cast down my self at thy Feet, imploring pardon for all my sins, particularly for the sins of my holy Things, and whatsoever it is that indisposed my Soul at thy Holy Table this day! be thou graciously pleased, by the Power of thy Spirit, to quicken me out of this deadness, and let me now, by an after-act, recover the vigour and exercise of my Graces, that I may do that now, which I should have done before. O do thou awaken the knowledg of a Crucified Saviour in me! awake my Faith, awake Repentance, awake my Love; yea, let all the Powers of my Soul be awakened, that I may in some measure recover the Influences of that blessed Ordinance I have bin admitted to this day, that so I may be enabled thereby to love thee more, and to serve thee better all the days of

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of my Life; through Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

If the Communicant finds, upon examination, that his temper and behaviour have bin some way suitable to this Holy Institution, let him express his thankfulness in his private retirement.

Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name: Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits, who forgiveth all thy Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases; who redeemeth thy Life from destruction, by the Blood of his only Son our Lord and Saviour; who crowneth thee with loving Kindness, and tender Mercies; who hath satisfied thy Mouth with good things, so that thy Youth is renewed like the Eagles. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? I have eaten of the Bread which came down from Heaven; I have drunk of the Cup of Salvation, in the strength of which I will call upon the Name of the Lord; I will pay my Vows to the Lord, which I have made in the midst of all his People, in the Courts of the Lord's House, even at the Table of the Lord my God. Had I the Tongue of Angels, I could not express the favour that God hath shewed me this day; 'twas the happiness of Abraham to lodg Angels, but I have received him into my Soul this day whom the Angels adore: Oh! let me entertain him with all Humility, Joy, and Obedience; let me not suffer any Impurities to abide in my Soul to offend the King of Glory, who now makes his aboad in me.

When Christ came into the World, the evil Spirits fled, and those that were possessed with Devils were relieved: May his coming now into my Soul, banish all evil Spirits, that I may be delivered from those

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those hellish Lusts which cast me sometimes into the Fire of Anger and Hatred, and sometimes into the Mire of unclean Pleasures. Oh ! let me not take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot. I am not mine own, I am not at mine own dispose ; I have sworn, and (through thy strength, O blessed Jesus) I will perform it, that I will keep thy Righteous Judgments.

And now having beheld, *as in a glass*, the Glory of our Lord, let me be *changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. Let the Name of my blessed Saviour be engraven on my Heart, and his Image remain fair and lively upon my Soul, that he may be ever before mine Eyes, that I may endeavour to imprint his excellent Qualities on my mind, that I may imitate his Humility and great Condescension *to us of low estate* ; that I may learn of him to be meek and patient, *to walk in love, as he loved us, and gave himself for us* ; that I may purify my self, *even as he is pure* ; that in all Conditions I may resign up my Will unto the Divine, as he did, both in doing and in suffering ; that I may go up and down doing good to all, even to Enemies, as he did. O that the *same Mind that was in Christ may be in me* ! that as he was in the World, so I may be ; that as long as I live Christ Jesus may be seen in me ; let not his Image and Likeness be lost while I am in being ; and let me labour to leave it upon others when I am dead and gone.

*The Worthy Communicant closing his Retirement
with Thanksgiving and Prayer.*

Bless the Lord, ye his Angels which excel in strength, that do his Commandments, hearkning to the Voice of his Words. Bless the Lord, all ye his Hosts, ye Ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless
the

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the Lord ye Saints of his, both in Heaven above, and in the Earth beneath. Bless the Lord all his Works in all places of his Dominion. Bless the Lord, O my Soul.

O most glorious and blessed Lord God, the Heavens are full of thy Glory, and the Earth of thy Goodness. I desire, with all Affection and Humility, to join with all the Angels, and Spirits of Just Men made perfect above, and with all the Saints here below, in giving Blessings and Praises, Honour and Glory unto Thee, for all the glorious Excellencies which are in thy Majesty; and for all the manifestations of them in the works of Creation and Providence, but especially in the great and glorious contrivance of our Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. I bless and adore thee for his wonderful Incarnation, for the holiness of his Life, for the glory of his Miracles, for his meritorious Death and Passion, for his glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and sitting at thy right hand; and for the coming of the Holy Ghost, and all the glorious Benefits thereby; and for all the means of Grace that I enjoy, particularly for the liberty of thy House and Table this day. O! touch my Soul so powerfully with a sense of the things I have heard, seen, and done this day, that I may go from one degree of Grace to another, that I may be more active and accurate in all Spiritual Duties, that I may Hear more attentively, Pray more fervently, Receive more believingly, keep the Sabbath more exactly, watch over my Heart and way more diligently; be more humble and pious towards God, more righteous towards Man, more sober and temperate towards my self, that I may walk more worthy of Christ, of the Covenant, of the Sacrament, Kingdom, Gospel, and Grace of God; that I may not only do that which is good, but that which is excellent; and that there may be some proportion between my frequent receiving and growing

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ing in Grace, that I may shew forth the Death of Christ in the power and efficacy of it all the days of my life, that he may see the Fruit of the travel of his Soul in me.

Oh merciful and eternal High Priest ! let that Sacrifice thou once offeredst on the Cross for the sins of the World, which thou dost now and ever represent in Heaven to thy Father, and which this day hath bin sacramentally exhibited on thy Table, obtain Mercy and Peace, Faith and Love, Unity and Safety, Grace and Glory, and all good things for thy whole Church, that thou mayst at last *present it to thy self a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.* Amen.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible; the only wise God, be glory and honour, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever; and let all the People say, *Amen.*

The Worthy Communicant's Charge and Resolution.

Thou hast once more (O my Soul) renewed thy Covenant, and received new Pledges of the Love of thy dear Lord; this day thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, and he hath avouched thee to be one of his People. Now thou art going down into the World, a World full of Snares and Temptations, besides a great deal of treachery within thy self; what circumspection must thou use, lest thou return to folly, and so provoke thy God, lose the benefits of this blessed Institution, and cause thy blessed Lord to leave thee; for how canst thou think (O my Soul) he will stay with thee if thou again offendest him, and makest no Conscience to watch over thy ways, and to avoid all temptations, and shun all occasions of sin? How can he endure thou shouldst lodge Harlots together with him? that thou shouldst let this World in

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in to be his Compeer, and divide thy Heart with him? O my Lord, I am resolved that thou *alone* shalt be my King, and sole Lord of all my Faculties, and that I will have no other Master but only thee: Thou hast given thy whole self to be a Sacrifice for me, I therefore offer up my whole self to thee *as a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service.*

*The Worthy Communicant's Longings after this,
and the Eternal Supper of the Lamb.*

O, when shall I again appear before God! when shall I again see his Power and his Glory, taste his Love and Goodness, as I have in the Sacrament this day! O that I may still be feasting my Soul on those Heavenly Dainties, those Spiritual Viands, those satisfying Pleasures at the Table of the Lord my God. When the King sat at his Table, did not my Spikenard send forth the smell thereof? O my God! one day in thy Courts, is better than a thousand else-where; this day is a shadow of the Eternal Day. O when shall I ever be with the Lord! when shall I be taken up with uninterrupted Admirations of Divine Love! when shall I come to the Eternal Supper of the Lamb! when shall I appear before thee (O my blessed Saviour) in *Mount Sion*, where I shall stand no more in need of Sacraments! for the Curtain being drawn, and the Veil Rent, I shall, without shadow or figure, behold thee Face to Face, where I shall hunger and thirst no more, for the Lamb on the Throne shall feed me with the Fruit of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden, and shall lead me to the Fountain of Living Waters, and God himself shall be all in all unto me. *Amen.*

F I N I S.